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A STUDY OF THE HANDLING OF CONTROVERSIAL ISSUES
IN SOCIAL STUDIES CLASSES OF EDMONTON
PUBLIC HIGH SCHOOLS

A Thesis
Submitted to
The Faculty of Graduate Studies
University of Alberta

Department of Secondary Education

In Partial Fulfilment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Education

by
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Edmonton, Alberta
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The undersigned certify that they have read, and recommend to the Faculty of Graduate Studies for acceptance, a thesis entitled "A Study of the Handling of Controversial Issues in Social Studies Classes of Edmonton Public High Schools", submitted by William Lloyd Badger, B. Ed., B.A., in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Education.



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ABSTRACT

This study was undertaken to discover the following:

1. Opinions and practices of Edmonton public high school social studies teachers concerning the teaching of controversial issues.
2. Whether or not a discrepancy existed between opinions and practices, and if such a discrepancy existed, the possible factors producing the discrepancy.

A rationale was presented consisting of the opinions of various authorities which would justify the coverage of controversial issues in social studies classes. This was done in order to offer some comparison with the opinions of Edmonton public high school social studies teachers.

On the basis of interviews with forty-five public high school social studies teachers, information was gathered concerning the teaching of controversial issues.

Upon analysis of the material gathered, it was concluded that:

1. The opinions of the teachers interviewed tended to coincide with the opinion of the various authorities concerning the teaching of controversial issues.
2. There was some question whether or not the practices of the teachers interviewed coincided with opinions on the teaching of controversial issues.

3. The factors producing the possible discrepancy referred to above would seem to be found within the teaching situation itself.

With reference to the information gathered in the interviews, certain recommendations for changes in existing practices were offered, which included the following:

1. Formulation of a written policy concerning the teaching of controversial issues.
2. More flexibility within the teaching situation itself to encourage the study of controversial issues.
3. Establishment of opportunities for social studies teachers to develop resource materials for studying various controversial issues.

The information gathered in the study also suggested possible further areas of research, including the following:

1. The relationship between years of teaching experience and opinion concerning the teaching of controversial issues.
2. The extent to which the teaching situation itself influences the coverage of controversial issues.
3. The relationship between university training and perception of, and coverage of, controversial issues.
4. The treatment given controversial issues by authorized textbooks in social studies classes.

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CHAPTER I

THE NATURE OF THE STUDY AND DEFINITION OF TERMS

The last two decades have been characterized by an increasing interest on the part of many people concerning the role of education in our contemporary society. This interest is especially noted in the area of the social studies where the question of whether or not to teach controversial issues has become an important issue. At a time when our society is faced with a variety of problems, or issues, the question of how to utilize the controversial aspects of our society in our educational system becomes increasingly important. Coan gave the following points as justification for the study of controversial issues:

1. In our society, all issues of importance are controversial by nature. To study issues of importance is to study issues which are controversial.
2. Controversial issues are inherent in orderly social change.
3. The study of controversial issues is essential for a democratic society in order to develop practice in critical inquiry and conflict solving, and to develop citizens able to decide for themselves concerning critical issues.
4. The study of controversial issues is supported by the psychological principle that students learn more effectively when they have an interest in the material they are studying.
5. Studying controversial issues would develop important skills connected with research.

6. Studying controversial issues will aid in developing desirable habits and attitudes.

7. Studying controversial issues is enjoyed by students.¹

Lunstrum developed the following rationale to justify the teaching of controversial issues:

1. Controversy is inevitable in a democratic, transitional society.
2. Controversial issues encompass both individual and societal needs and thus provide a significant motivational force.
3. A dynamic, complex culture which is uncriticized perpetuates contradictions and conflicts on both interpersonal and intrapersonal levels.
4. Judicious, objective treatment of sharply opposing social alternatives in a non-threatening classroom atmosphere is indispensable in the creative resolution of conflict.
5. The manner in which the school treats controversial issues is an important measure of its conception of the social role of education.²

At the present time there is still considerable opposition to the view that the social studies should concern itself with studying controversial issues. Various groups in society object to the study of issues which might threaten their security or which might lead to a questioning of their position. Albery and Albery identified some

¹Clark Coan. "A Study of the Attitudes of Selected Social Studies Teachers and Parents of Kansas High School Students Regarding the Inclusion of Controversial Issues as Part of the Secondary School Program." Unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of Kansas, 1961. pp. 2-7.

²John Paul Lunstrum, "An Inquiry Into the Proper Role of the Social Studies Teacher With Reference to the Use of Controversy." Dissertation Abstracts 21:2634, March, 1961.

of these groups as including patriotic organizations concerned about the teaching of Communism, economic groups anxious to promote a certain view of the free-enterprise system, religious and other groups protesting over the teaching of biological evolution, and various groups anxious for the school to avoid discussing issues involving racial or minority groups.³

Certain factors in the school situation itself may discourage the teaching of controversial issues. The lack of time in a crowded curriculum, the large size of most classes, a lack on the teachers' part of a sound method of inquiry, and the reluctance on the part of many teachers to get themselves involved in issues which may bring them under community pressure all combine in varying degrees to make it possible for many teachers to either avoid completely the controversial aspects of our society or else treat them in a half-hearted manner.

Despite these pressures and factors discouraging the study of controversial issues, the time has come when the school should acknowledge the controversial elements of our society when developing a curriculum. If the school is to educate youth for citizenship in a democratic society, it should allow for the study and discussion of the vital, unsolved significant issues on which there is public disagreement and teach the skills necessary for this study and discussion. It is with such a belief that this study was undertaken.

³Harold Albery and Elsie Albery, Reorganizing the High-School Curriculum, Revised edition. (New York: Macmillan Company, 1962), p. 364.

I. STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

This study will attempt to determine the opinions of high school social studies teachers on the teaching of controversial issues in the social studies curriculum and also to determine their practices concerning the teaching of controversial issues. There are two main objectives of the study:

1. To compare the opinions and practices of high school social studies teachers concerning the teaching of controversial issues.
2. To determine the extent to which the factors of professional training and teaching experience influence opinions and practices concerning the teaching of controversial issues.

II. DEFINITION OF TERMS

For the purposes of clarity in this study, the following terms have been defined for the reader.

Social Studies. Courses in the Edmonton Public High School curriculum labelled Social Studies 10, Social Studies 20, Social Studies 30, and Social Studies 33(35). The latter course is also referred to as Social Studies 30(Diploma).

High school teachers. Teachers who are teaching Grades Ten, Eleven, and Twelve.

Social studies teacher. A teacher whose social studies teaching schedule constitutes more than half of his teaching schedule.

Controversial issues. Situations in society as conceived by the interviewee where a difference of opinion is recognized as to what is the proper attitude or course of action.

III. DELIMITING THE STUDY

The study will refer to opinions and practices of high school social studies teachers in the Edmonton Public School System.

The study will not attempt to develop a statement of methodology for the coverage of controversial issues.

The study will not attempt to ascertain the thoroughness with which controversial issues are covered.

The study will be concerned with opinions and practices in the school year 1965-1966.

IV. VALUE OF THE STUDY

Prior to this study, studies concerning opinions and practices of Edmonton public high school social studies teachers on the teaching of controversial issues were non-existent.

In the Annual Report of the Superintendent to the Edmonton Public School Board for 1964-1965, the statement was made that the social studies program should be revised in order to include the study of the social, ethical, and moral values in our society.⁴ Such a revision will of necessity be concerned with the controversial issues in

⁴The Annual Report of the Superintendent to the Edmonton Public School Board, 1964-1965, Edmonton, 1965, p. 6.

our society. If such a revision is to be desired, how will the opinions and practices of the high school social studies teachers reflect this desired change?

The studies by Hall⁵ and Deam⁶ on the teaching of controversial issues reflect a discrepancy between beliefs and practice in relation to the place of controversial issues in the social studies curriculum. This study will attempt to determine whether or not a similar discrepancy exists between opinions and practices of Edmonton public high school social studies teachers.

The studies by Lunstrum⁷, Coan⁸, and Kirby⁹ refer to the desirability of a written statement of policy concerning the teaching of controversial issues. The existence or lack of such a policy may have some bearing on the teaching of controversial issues by Edmonton public high school social studies teachers. The study will attempt to determine teacher knowledge of such a policy and will attempt to assess whether the presence or lack of such a policy affects the teaching of controversial issues.

⁵Truman Leroy Hall, "A Study of the Teaching of Controversial Issues in the Secondary Schools of the State of Ohio," unpublished doctoral dissertation, Ohio State University, 1953.

⁶Calvin Deam, "Opinions of Virginia Schoolmen Concerning the Treatment of Controversial Issues," unpublished doctoral dissertation, Indiana University, 1957.

⁷John Paul Lunstrum, loc. cit.

⁸Clark Coan, loc. cit.

⁹Thelma Thompson Kirby, "A Study of the Handling of Controversial Issues in Social Studies Classes of Selected High Schools in Georgia," unpublished doctoral dissertation, Auburn University, 1964.

V. PROCEDURE USED IN THE STUDY

The Instrument

An interview form was prepared to collect information in the following areas:

1. General information relating to sex, years of professional training, years of teaching experience, and social studies courses being taught.
2. Teachers' opinions of the place of controversial issues in the high school curriculum.
3. The frequency with which controversial issues are dealt with by the high school social studies teachers.
4. Teachers' opinions on those controversial issues they believe should be dealt with and those controversial issues they believe should not be dealt with in the high school social studies classroom.
5. The sources from which controversial issues are drawn by high school social studies teachers.
6. Those controversial issues which have actually been dealt with in the school year 1965-1966 by high school social studies teachers.
7. Teachers' opinions on the blocks or obstacles which might prevent or restrict the coverage of controversial issues in the high school social studies classroom.
8. Teacher knowledge concerning the presence or lack of a written statement of policy from the school board on the teaching of controversial issues.

The interview form used was a modified version of the questionnaire used by Hall in his study of the teaching of controversial issues in the secondary schools of Ohio.¹⁰ Hall's model was used in this study because it attempted to compare teachers' opinions about the teaching of controversial issues with actual practice in relation to the teaching of controversial issues. Also, Hall's study was concerned with various factors which might influence the actual teaching of controversial issues. In using the interview method, the following assumptions are made:

1. The interview is the most effective method of gathering data for this study.
2. The respondents will give honest and accurate answers to questions asked.
3. Teachers, generally, determine the coverage of controversial issues in the classroom.

The interview form which was finally developed was not pre-tested as it had been largely derived from the questionnaire form used by Hall in his study of the teaching of controversial issues in Ohio.¹¹

Collection of the data

Permission was secured from the Edmonton Public School Board

¹⁰ Truman Leroy Hall, op. cit.

¹¹ Ibid.

to interview social studies teachers in the high schools. A list of teachers willing to cooperate in the study was obtained from each of the high schools. Interview times were arranged with each of the cooperating teachers. A copy of the interview form was sent to the cooperating teachers in order to familiarize them with the questions to be asked, and also to allow them to organize information on the questions referring to their practices. The interviews were then conducted with the cooperating teachers.

VI. ORGANIZATION OF THE STUDY

Chapter One has outlined the general nature of the study.

Chapter Two will present a rationale justifying the teaching of controversial issues in the social studies.

Chapter Three will present a review of literature dealing with the teaching of controversial issues.

Chapter Four will present a description of the group of teachers used in the study.

Chapter Five will present a general analysis of the questions in the study.

Chapter Six will present an analysis of the questions according to the variables of university training and teaching experience.

Chapter Seven will present a summary of the study, conclusions from the study and some recommendations arising from the study.

CHAPTER II

A RATIONALE

The question of whether or not controversial issues should be examined in the social studies curriculum is a critical one. As a basis for the need of such examination, this investigator will attempt to develop a rationale. Opinions of various authorities will be presented which would justify the study of controversial issues in our schools. Then the opinions and practices of Edmonton public high school social studies teachers will be examined in later chapters to see if they are consistent with the opinions of the authorities.

I. A CONSIDERATION OF THE CONDITION OF CONTEMPORARY SOCIETY

Any system of education should reflect the society in which it functions. In order to understand why controversial issues should be an integral part of the social studies, it will be necessary first to briefly examine our contemporary society, pointing out its major characteristics.

Although the majority of opinions presented refer to conditions in the American society, various authors have commented on the same set of conditions which can be noticed in our own society. In the preface to his book on social problems in Canada, Laskin noted that,

...Canada is part of a vastly complicated and rapidly changing social world, and she is not without troubles....Let us take stock, then, of our major social problems, including separatism, and

difficulties in various racial and ethnic group relations, work, population and immigration, family relations, health services, addiction, mental illness, sexual deviance, crime and delinquency.¹

Our age has often been described as the Age of Anxiety. At first glance, it would seem strange that our age should be described in such a negative fashion. Our standard of living has never been matched, new discoveries advance the war against disease, illiteracy is becoming more and more a rarity, and our knowledge of the universe is increasing at a rapid rate. However, closer examination reveals many reasons why our age has been so-named. Our society is faced with problems which at times seem insurmountable. On the international level, the ever-present threat of thermonuclear war, the ideological struggle of the Cold War, the spectre of overpopulation, and the seeming inaccessibility of world peace are all problems demanding solution. At the national level, also, are many issues or problems which require decisive action on our part. Mead noted many signs of social disorganization such as unemployment, the rising rate of school dropouts, racial injustice, the presence of depressed areas in our affluent society, crumbling cities, and serious crime and delinquency rates which were challenges to our contemporary culture.²

In the face of this multitude of problems, the individual in our society often feels very inadequate or helpless in arriving at

¹Richard Laskin (editor), Social Problems: A Canadian Profile. (Toronto: McGraw-Hill Company, 1964), P. iii.

²Margaret Mead, And Keep Your Powder Dry. (New York: William Morrow and Company, 1965), p. 298.

solutions. Kluckhohn commented that one of the more noticeable features of our society is a strong sense of personal insecurity.³ Various factors are responsible for the development in people of feelings of insecurity or helplessness. The inability to solve the many human problems of our industrial society, the impersonal nature of our vast urban complexes, the social mobility which tends to break down dominant social patterns governing our interpersonal relationships, and the gradual weakening of religious faith all contribute to producing what Mead referred to as a "profound moral malaise"⁴ which she believed to characterize our society. In describing our contemporary society, Deam noted the following as being major characteristics:

1. The society is in transition. Largely as a result of the technological revolution of the 20th Century, many significant changes have taken place. The individual often has difficulty adjusting his beliefs and attitudes to the continuously evolving society.

2. There exists in our culture a definite culture lag. The term "culture lag" refers to the gap between man's material environment and his institutional arrangements and beliefs.

3. The society features severe culture conflict. While this conflict is not new to our society, the present conflict between various ethnic, racial, religious, or economic groups in our highly interdependent

³Clyde Kluckhohn, Mirror for Man. (Greenwich, Conn.: Fawcett Publications, 1965), p. 205.

⁴Margaret Mead, op. cit., p. 306.

dent society can have severe repercussions.

4. Our society is faced with many unresolved issues. These issues include the limits of individual freedom in our society, the proper role of government, the proper utilization of our country's resources, and issues in the field of foreign affairs.⁵

Faced with a multitude of problems on the one hand, and the lack of clear-cut solutions on the other, it is not surprising that controversy should be so ever-present in our society. Indeed, controversy has its positive aspects in our democratic society, for without it, progress could not be made, because progress results from new ideas which are seldom popular when they are first advanced. However, there are many negative aspects to the controversy found in our dynamic society. Lynd commented on the contradictions found in the dominant values of our society and stated that the attempt to live by conflicting beliefs or values was one of the most characteristic elements of our contemporary culture.⁶ Among the contradictions stated by Lynd, the following are some major examples:

1. Honesty is the best policy.
But: Business is business, and a businessman would be a fool if he didn't cover his hand.
2. Education is a fine thing.
But: It is the practical men who get things done.

⁵Calvin Deam, op. cit., pp. 38-53.

⁶Robert S. Lynd, Knowledge For What? (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1939), p. 59.

3. Patriotism and public service are fine things.
But: Of course, a man has to look out for himself.⁷

Lynd also developed a list of the major characteristics of our contemporary society and the following are some of these characteristics which would contribute to the conflict or controversy found in the average citizen's life:

1. There is an uneven structuring of the various functional areas of living. The lack of balance or coherence is apparent in examples such as the elaboration of the institution of war and the influence of our society of the economic institutions.
2. The culture stresses individual competitive aggressiveness as the basis for personal or collective security.
3. There exists in the culture extreme differences in power.
4. Our culture is featured by great individual mobility and consequently its citizens tend to put down shallow roots.
5. Our culture features a pattern of large urban populations held together principally by the tie of the individual to his job and not by any deep feelings toward the community.
6. The nature of our culture encourages considerable conflict between the patterned roles of the two sexes.
7. Our culture has a pattern of markedly uneven change, and tolerating at many points extreme disjunctions and contradictions.⁸

⁷Ibid., pp. 61-62.

⁸Robert S. Lynd, op. cit., pp. 63-105.

The contrast between legal or political theory and the practices of many citizens was for Kluckhohn one of the severest strains undermining the equilibrium of our social system.⁹ Smith, Stanley, and Shores noted that contradiction and ambiguity affected many of the principles by which our society lives and that this confusion encouraged the development of social disorders and neurotic personalities.¹⁰ Getzels pointed out the strains or conflicts appearing in our value system. While indicating that such sacred values as democracy, belief in the individual, equality, and optimism for the future are not likely to change¹¹, he believed that regional differences, rural-urban differences, and social class differences were producing conflicting values. Some of the more serious conflicting values were the following:

1. The value of hard work and success vs. the value of sociability and frictionless interpersonal relations.
2. Future-time orientation vs. present-time orientation.
3. Independent, autonomous self vs. compliance and group conformity.
4. Puritan morality vs. a relativistic moral attitude.¹²

⁹Clyde Kluckhohn, op. cit., p. 216.

¹⁰B. Othanel Smith, William O. Stanley, and J. Harlan Shores, Fundamentals of Curriculum Development. (New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, Inc., 1957), pp. 68-71.

¹¹J. W. Getzels, "Changing Values Challenge the Schools, "The School Review, Spring, 1957, pp. 94-95.

¹²Ibid., pp. 96-99.

In such a culture as has been described above, surely one of the functions of education is to prepare youth to be able to cope with the inconsistencies and problems which face him as a participating member in the society. In order to carry out this function effectively, it is difficult to avoid the examination of these inconsistencies and problems within the school situation.

II. THE ROLE OF EDUCATION IN CONTEMPORARY SOCIETY

In a society challenged by a variety of serious problems demanding solution and characterized by conflict or ambiguity in its value systems, what is to be the function of education? The confusion regarding what should be the dominant ideas or values of our culture is reflected in the confusion regarding what should be the proper role of education. Pounds and Bryner regarded the following as the major contrasting viewpoints of the school's role in society:

1. Develop the intellect.
2. Preserve the cultural heritage.
3. Prepare individuals to live in our present society.
4. Develop individuals who can critically refine the social heritage.
5. Develop individuals with the ability and desire to create a new society.
6. Develop the individual's ability to the fullest.¹³

¹³Ralph Pounds and James Bryner, The School in American Society. (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1959), pp. 445-474.

Brubacher believed that the dominant viewpoint concerning the school's role in society was that education should function to conserve the existing social order.¹⁴ However, if education is to prepare the individual to participate successfully in our contemporary society, characterized by change and conflict, this role of education is no longer practical. As an alternative, Brubacher outlined a role for education which would accommodate the ever-present controversy in our society and also which would come to grips with the many problems facing our society.

In other words, they (liberals and progressives) think that the normative function of the school may also involve originating major changes, changes possibly in the norm or frame of reference itself. In this phase, the normative function of the school is creative rather than conservative. It introduces, therefore, the second outstanding theory on the relation of the school to the social order, namely, that it is the duty of the school to take some initiative and responsibility for social progress.¹⁵

This reconstructionist view of education was endorsed by Brameld who called for education to rebuild, not merely perpetuate, cultural structures, habits, and attitudes.¹⁶ Smith, Stanley, and Shores clarified the reconstructionist philosophy.

. . . they (educators) must relate the work of the school to the society of which it is a part. On the one hand, they must aid students to comprehend and analyze the major forces operating in

¹⁴John S. Brubacher, Modern Philosophies of Education. (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, Inc., 1950), p. 187.

¹⁵Ibid, p. 189.

¹⁶Theodore Brameld, Toward a Reconstructed Philosophy of Education. (New York: The Dryden Press, Inc., 1956), p. 167.

society and the major problems which confront it. On the other hand, they must assist students to master the techniques and acquire the attitudes appropriate to democratic participation in society.¹⁷

What is conceived here is a system of education which becomes an active agent in shaping society and determining its rate or direction of progress. However, there is, at the present, a certain reluctance to give education this power. Pounds and Bryner explained the reluctance thusly;

. . . by and large, the school is fearful of experimentation and the public is afraid to have it experiment. Since the school is dealing with the youthful and immature, society is very careful to have it teach only the tested and the tried. There is a fear, culturally originating when society was prone to instability and new ideas tended to upset the stability, that the young might take up the new ideas too quickly or go off on some tangent that would be detrimental to society.¹⁸

If education is to fulfill its role of preparing individuals to participate effectively in our society, and if solutions to the problems facing our society are to be found, then this reluctance must be overcome. The necessity of the educational system to deal with controversial issues was stated with clarity by Hall.

If it is assumed that students learn through participation in activities which are meaningful to them, then it is quite natural that controversial issues will play an important part in the program of the secondary school. If it is held that truth can be determined only through scientific and democratic techniques of inquiry in the solution of significant problems of living, then all significant issues of a controversial nature can be discussed

¹⁷B. Othanel Smith, William O. Stanley, and J. Harlan Shores, op. cit., p. 579.

¹⁸Pounds and Bryner, op. cit., p. 477.

in the classroom. If learning is to be viewed as the reconstruction of experiences, then it must be the student who does this reconstruction by and for himself. This theory implies that the school has a distinct obligation to deal with controversial issues.¹⁹

III. THE ROLE OF THE SOCIAL STUDIES

Much has been written in recent years about what should be the role of the social studies in our contemporary system of education. Engle called for a social studies curriculum which would emphasize general ideas or concepts and stated that a more effective treatment of our persistent social problems was the single most important objective in the social studies.²⁰ The necessity for more study of societal problems was also endorsed by Hunt and Metcalf who called for the social studies program to encourage reflective thought in the closed areas of our culture.²¹ These closed areas are

. . . areas of belief and behavior which are largely closed to rational thought. In these areas, people usually react to problems blindly and emotionally. Closed areas are saturated with prejudices and taboos.²²

Shaver and Oliver believed that the content of the social studies curriculum should be derived from a consideration of societal needs

¹⁹Truman Leroy Hall, op. cit., p. 265.

²⁰Shirley H. Engle, "Thoughts in Regard to Revision," Social Education. 27:184, April, 1963.

²¹Maurice P. Hunt and Lawrence E. Metcalf, Teaching High School Social Studies. (New York: Harper and Brothers, Publishers, 1955), p. 223.

²²Ibid., p. 6.

rather than the needs of the social science disciplines.²³ In their opinion, such a consideration would result in the social studies curriculum exposing students to the public problems which exist in our society, and teaching the student to analyze these public problems within some useful political and social framework.²⁴

The National Council for the Social Studies stated that free and public discussion of issues is the heart of the democratic process. Thus, education in a democratic society must emphasize the study and discussion of controversial issues and teach the skills needed for this study and discussion.²⁵ The California State Department of Education listed the following as partial criteria of an effective social studies program:

1. It (the social studies program) gives attention to current and persistent problems and utilizes contributions from the social sciences in formulating suggested solutions for those problems.
2. It (the social studies program) stimulates creative thinking and reasoned action based upon an objective study of controversial issues.²⁶

²³Donald Oliver and James Shaver, Teaching Public Issues in the High School. (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1966), p. 9.

²⁴Ibid., p. 13.

²⁵The National Council for the Social Studies, "The Treatment of Controversial Issues in the School," Social Education. 15:232, May, 1951.

²⁶California State Department of Education, Report of the State Central Committee on Social Studies to the California State Curriculum Commission. (Sacramento, 1961), p. 6.

The Department of Education of the Province of Alberta in commenting on the purpose of education stated that

. . . the student must learn the processes of inquiry and problem solving rather than technical skills, the "how" rather than the "what" to think. It is with such skills and habits that we are concerned.²⁷

The study of controversial issues could be highly effective in developing the processes of inquiry and problem solving just referred to.

The Department laid great stress on the teaching of current events in the social studies which would seek to accomplish the following objectives:

1. Develop the ability to think critically rather than emotionally about current issues.
2. Develop understanding of the processes of dealing with controversial issues, of arriving at consensus, or of reaching valid conclusions.
3. To provide a basis for rational interpretation of social, political, and economic problems.²⁸

The Report of the Superintendent to the Edmonton Public School Board for 1964-1965 was critical of the present social studies courses for their general failure to train students to think in terms of human values.²⁹ It noted that great stress was laid on accumulating facts

²⁷Department of Education, Province of Alberta, Senior High School Curriculum Guide for Social Studies 10, 20, and 30 (interim) September, 1965, p. 11.

²⁸Ibid., p. 18.

²⁹The Annual Report of the Superintendent to the Edmonton Public School Board 1964-1965, Edmonton, 1965. p. 6.

about cultures rather than critically examining the values inherent in these cultures.³⁰ Commenting on proposed changes, the report went on,

It therefore appears that the entire social studies program requires a revision in terms of what the fundamental objectives of such a program should be--to improve and strengthen the social and moral fibre of the nation.³¹

The forgoing statements about the desired aims of the social studies have been written by a variety of people and organizations. Yet, running through all the statements is a common thread. In all these statements there is the belief that the social studies program, to be effective, must concern itself to a considerable extent with the controversial areas of our society. Such a concern is to be justified for two general reasons; (1) to supply information on certain persistent social problems and develop skills in gathering and evaluating information, and (2) to help the students arrive at valid conclusions with regard to the persistent social problems and develop a discipline in the method of resolving current problems. The importance of these two factors was recognized by Massialas.

. . . it would follow that a social studies program is acceptable to the extent that it meets the following criteria: (1) It emphasizes principles and generalizations which explain human interactions. (2) It incorporates within itself models of search, verifiability, and invention which the learner employs in his

³⁰Ibid.

³¹Ibid.

quest to find dependable knowledge.³²

Such a social studies program would enable the student to effectively examine human behavior and human institutions and thereby better understand, and participate more effectively in, the society in which he lives.

IV. PSYCHOLOGICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Assuming that one of the objectives of education is to develop mature citizens able to resolve basic issues confronting society, certain questions must be considered. (1) Can teachers show students how to deal effectively with controversy by avoiding any discussion of controversial issues? (2) Can teachers develop in students the skills of critical thinking and the procedures essential to effective problem solving by avoiding controversial issues? These two issues were realized by Engle who pointed out that,

Psychology tells us that we learn by doing. There is no hope of learning socially intelligent behavior in controversial situations without practicing the behavior in controversial situations.³³

Psychologists and researchers have given us much evidence to justify greater attention to controversial issues in the social studies.

³²Byron Massialas, "Revising the Social Studies: An Inquiry-Centered Approach," Social Education, 27:186, April, 1963.

³³Shirley Engle, "Controversial Issues in World History Classes," Improving the Teaching of World History, Twentieth Yearbook of the National Council for the Social Studies, Edith West, editor. (Washington, D. C., 1949), p. 148.

The concept of the transfer of learning is supported here. Tyler illustrated this when he stated that students will be more likely to apply their learning when they recognize the similarity between the situations encountered in life and situations in which the learning took place.³⁴

Gates also realized the significance of transfer and noted how

. . . the theory of transfer by identical components has encouraged and justified movements designed to make education, in its choice of materials, methods, and spirits, less academic, artificial, and isolated and more closely related to significant personal and social activities.³⁵

Certain characteristics of adolescent development as stated by the California State Department of Education would make the study of controversial issues interesting and beneficial for this age group. Adolescents need to develop a new perspective regarding their role as members of a larger society. They have the capacity for independent work on interesting problems. They are becoming concerned with the meaning of life and are anxious to establish themselves in the order of things.³⁶ Commenting on the implications of these characteristics for instruction in the social studies, the Department went on,

Advances in technology and other factors bring about changes in the structure of our society. The school must keep its program in harmony with these changes so that youth are being prepared continually to grapple with new and diverse problems.

³⁴Ralph Tyler, Basic Principles of Curriculum and Instruction. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1950), p. 12.

³⁵Arthur Gates, et. al., Educational Psychology. (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1948), p. 493.

³⁶California State Department of Education, op. cit., p. 48.

. . . As they (adolescents) progress through high school, increased emphasis should be given to the economic, social, and political factors and issues that influence activities in the world today.³⁷

Various studies concerning the development of critical thinking would seem to justify greater attention to the study of controversial issues in the social studies curriculum. Glaser was concerned that the schools were not succeeding in cultivating in the pupils an ability to think critically about issues concerning which there is a difference of opinion.³⁸ He set up his study on the assumption that critical thinking can be developed through certain kinds of training.³⁹ He found that lesson units taught did stimulate growth in the ability to think critically, that an attitude of wanting evidence for beliefs is most subject to general transfer, and that students with varying levels of intelligence can profit from training in critical thinking.⁴⁰ Kight and Mickelson wanted to determine the relative effects on learning of problem-centered and subject-centered units of instruction.⁴¹ They found that pupils learned more rules of action with the problem approach, more factual information was acquired through the problem approach, and

³⁷Ibid., p. 49.

³⁸Edward M. Glaser, An Experiment in the Development of Critical Thinking. (New York: Bureau of Publications, Columbia University, (1941), p. 173.

³⁹Ibid., p. 174.

⁴⁰Ibid., pp. 175-177.

⁴¹Stanford Kight and John Mickelson, "Problem vs. Subject," The Clearing House, 24:3, September, 1949.

that pupils of all levels of intelligence learned more rules of action with the problem-centered approach.⁴² Massialas wanted to determine whether the problem-solving method could develop the ability to think critically as well as supply as much knowledge as might be acquired under a traditional method in a course on world history.⁴³ His major findings were: (1) students using the problems approach learned as many facts as students using the conventional approach, (2) students using the problem approach developed various skills involved in problem solving which were not readily apparent in the other group, (3) the class using the problems approach was less teacher-directed, (4) students using the problems approach were able to discuss controversial issues in a more systematic fashion, and (5) more student participation and reflective inquiry developed among students using the problems approach.⁴⁴ Shaver and Oliver, acting on the belief that the analysis of public controversy should be the prime function of the social studies curriculum in public secondary schools,⁴⁵ developed a curriculum for seventh and eighth grade students in American history and geography which emphasized studying case his-

⁴² Ibid., p. 7.

⁴³ Byron Massialas, "Developing a Method of Inquiry in Teaching World History," Bulletin of the School of Education, Indiana University, 39:2, May, 1963.

⁴⁴ Ibid., pp. 32-34.

⁴⁵ Donald Oliver, "A Curriculum Based on the Analysis of Public Controversy," Social Education, 29:220, April, 1965.

tories involving public controversy.⁴⁶ The study found that students of junior high school age can be taught to think in abstract terms for analyzing public controversy, to evaluate statements of others for analysis of controversy, and to use concepts developed in a meaningful way when dealing with controversial issues.⁴⁷ In summing up the initial phases of their study, Shaver and Oliver gave encouraging support to the belief that controversial issues should and can have a significant place in the social studies curriculum.

The Project's research findings indicate that students learned to apply a complex framework of analysis to the discussion of public issues and that their gains in knowledge of traditional social studies content and an interest in societal issues compared favorably with those of control students exposed to more conventional curricula.⁴⁸

V. SUMMARY

This chapter has attempted to develop a rationale to justify the teaching of controversial issues in the social studies curriculum, by presenting the views of various authorities on the nature of contemporary society, the function of education, the role of the social studies, as well as various ideas from the field of educational psychology. The purpose behind presenting this rationale was to allow the writer to determine, if possible, whether or not opinions and

⁴⁶James Shaver and Donald Oliver, "Teaching Students to Analyze Public Controversy: A Curriculum Project Report," Social Education, 28:192, April, 1964.

⁴⁷Ibid., p. 194.

⁴⁸Ibid., p. 248.

practices of Edmonton public high school social studies teachers were consistent with the opinions of various authorities concerning the place of controversial issues in the social studies curriculum.

A brief description of our contemporary society was given, pointing out some of the inconsistencies which exist in our value system, as well as indicating some of the major problems facing our society. The necessity for education to prepare the individual to cope with these inconsistencies and problems was stressed.

The prevailing view of the role of education in society was given and then an alternative role was presented which would better accommodate the controversial aspects of our society.

A discussion on the proposed role of the social studies in contemporary education was given. Stress was placed on the social studies curriculum spending considerable time examining the controversial areas of our society in order to give the individual broad generalizations concerning human behavior as well as a method to use when coping with societal problems.

Certain psychological ideas were advanced to justify the study of controversial issues in the schools. The concept of the transfer of learning was referred to as well as certain characteristics of adolescent development. Various studies involving critical thinking were also briefly examined to illustrate how they would support the study of controversial issues in the social studies curriculum.

CHAPTER III

RELATED LITERATURE

This chapter will consider literature dealing with the teaching of controversial issues. The literature will be presented in two general sections: literature outlining the current approach to controversial issues in the schools, and related studies which have examined the place of controversial issues in the curriculum.

I. CURRENT APPROACH TO THE TEACHING OF CONTROVERSIAL ISSUES

In general, there appears to be considerable discrepancy between theory and practice regarding the place of controversial issues in the curriculum. Dimond concluded that very little critical thinking about crucial social issues was being done in the schools,¹ a conclusion also arrived at by Hullfish and Smith² who tried to explain why this situation existed.

It is not surprising, then, that the fostering of thinking has seldom been a continuing central concern of the schools. Whatever the public may say about prizes the development of thinking when it speaks in general terms, it finds it difficult to be at ease when young people begin to think seriously about specific problems in terms that would result in answers adults have long

¹Stanley Dimond, Schools and the Development of Good Citizens. (Detroit: Wayne University Press, 1953), p. 129.

²H. Gordon Hullfish and Philip Smith, Reflective Thinking: The Method of Education. (New York: Dodd, Mead, and Company, 1961), p. 9.

resisted.³

Eisner was critical of the school's failure to examine values and beliefs at a time in history which is so dominated by the clash of conflicting ideologies.⁴ He went on to mention further shortcomings of the schools.

The tendency for the secondary schools to avoid the value questions involved in segregation, urban renewal, birth control, mental health, and national security is an abrogation of the school's responsibility to prepare individuals who will be able to deal intelligently with these problems.⁵

Selakovich called for more critical thinking about social issues in the social studies⁶ and pointed out the unhappy situation of the social studies curriculum remaining tradition-bound in a society which has been unable to remain tradition-bound.⁷ Olicker and Wolfson explained why there exists student apathy in relation to the social studies.

As pupils become aware of the existence of areas closed to consideration in their social studies classes, it is not surprising that their interest diminishes. An implicit gentlemen's agreement not to become involved in "controversial" issues which are inappropriate for the maturity level of our students makes

³Ibid., p. 19.

⁴Elliot Eisner, "Education & the Idea of Mankind," The School Review, 73:30, Spring, 1965.

⁵Ibid., p. 46.

⁶Daniel Selakovich, Problems in Secondary Social Studies. (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1965), pp. 257-258.

⁷Ibid., p. 258.

much of the social studies instruction a bland wasteland.⁸

Textbooks and other materials of instruction have been criticized for their failure to develop controversial issues. Alexander was critical of history textbooks which avoided issues that might offend segments of the public, thus becoming bland, dull, and lifeless.⁹ Krug also criticized history textbooks and called for more realistic and challenging material to prevent students from becoming disillusioned cynics upon entering our society as adults.¹⁰ Shaver studied social studies textbooks in use to see how they encouraged reflective thinking about social issues.¹¹ Among his conclusions were the following:

Reflective thinking in controversial areas suffers from omission as well as inadequate conceptualization. . . . Treatment of values and value conflicts in this society, as they relate to governmental decisions, is at best haphazard and lacking in order, and at worst inaccurate and misleading.¹²

Rodine believed that student lethargy regarding current social issues could be partially explained by the fact that school libraries exclude,

⁸I. I. Olicker and J. Wolfson, "The Need for Renovating the Teaching of Social Studies," The Clearing House, 38:48, September, 1964.

⁹Albert Alexander, "The Grey Flannel Cover on the American History Textbook," Social Education, 24:11, January, 1960.

¹⁰Mark Krug, "'Safe' Textbooks and Citizenship Education," The School Review, 68:475, Winter, 1960.

¹¹James Shaver, "Reflective Thinking, Values and Social Studies Textbooks," The School Review, 73:229, Autumn, 1965.

¹²Ibid., p. 233.

intentionally or unintentionally, the more controversial materials.¹³

In a survey of periodicals used in high school libraries, he noted that the more liberal and outspoken the magazine, the greater its exclusion.¹⁴

The preparation teachers receive at universities will have a significant influence on their approach to controversial issues. In commenting on the general reluctance on the part of most social studies teachers to examine controversial issues in a detailed manner, Brodbelt pointed out that most social studies teachers are trained under a curriculum designed primarily to promote factual knowledge of subject matter with little emphasis upon social issues and a critical analysis of them.¹⁵ Ballinger studied a variety of textbooks used in social studies methods courses to see their stand on the study of controversial issues. He found that, with only one exception, none of the textbooks treated the question of controversial issues to any substantial degree.¹⁶ Further, only two of the books studied gave any indication that controversial issues involved conflicts over values as well as conflicts over facts.¹⁷ Metcalf was also critical of social

¹³Floyd Rodine, "Teach Them to Think . . . Our Way!" Social Studies, 56:180, October, 1965.

¹⁴Ibid., p. 181.

¹⁵Samuel Brodbelt, "Exploring Crucial Issues in the Social Studies Field," Social Studies, 55:243, December, 1964.

¹⁶Stanley Ballinger, "The Social Studies and Social Controversy," The School Review, 71:99, Spring, 1963.

¹⁷Ibid., p. 101.

studies methods courses which tended to be uninspiring and where "exhortation has been high; analysis has been absent."¹⁸" With the sort of preparation referred to above, it would not be surprising if social studies teachers gave only lip service to the discussion of controversial issues.

II. RELATED STUDIES

Several studies have been carried out in an attempt to determine how controversial issues are being handled or should be handled in the curriculum. Hall studied the teaching of controversial issues in the secondary schools of the State of Ohio. Among his findings, the following were significant to the present study: (1) There was a considerable difference of opinion concerning the place of controversial issues in the high school curriculum. (2) The majority of teachers felt there were no controversial issues which would be inappropriate for classroom discussion. (3) The teaching of controversial issues was not an activity of consequence in secondary schools in Ohio. (4) Adult problems, rather than actual problems which might concern the adolescent were dealt with in the classroom. (5) The two factors of professional training and teaching experience influence the teaching of controversial issues.¹⁹

Kirby studied the handling of controversial issues in high

¹⁸Lawrence Metcalf, "Some Guidelines for Changing Social Studies Education," Social Education, 37:200, April, 1963.

¹⁹Truman Leroy Hall, op. cit., pp. 267-271.

schools in Georgia and the following findings were pertinent to the present study: (1) Teachers believed that controversial issues have a place in the school program. (2) More adult problems rather than problems of concern to adolescents were examined. (3) Although obstacles were encountered, they did not significantly obstruct the examination of controversial issues in the classrooms.²⁰ Among the recommendations made by Kirby was one that boards of education should establish a written policy encouraging the handling of controversial issues in the classroom.²¹

Deam studied the opinion of educators in Virginia on certain given controversial issues. The following are some of his major findings: (1) Teachers believed that the treatment of controversial issues would play an important part in an effective social studies program. (2) The majority of respondents believed that the freedom of the teacher to render his own opinion during a discussion of controversial issues should be somewhat limited. (3) The majority of respondents believed that there should be limitations on the development of student opinions concerning controversial issues. (4) A majority of teachers polled were unaware of the existence of a written statement of policy from the school board concerning the teaching of controversial issues.²² Included in Deam's recommendations was one

²⁰Thelma Thompson Kirby, op. cit., pp. 118-123.

²¹Ibid., pp. 125-126.

²²Calvin Deam, op. cit., pp. 272-283.

calling for local school boards to formulate and adopt written statements of policy regarding the teaching of controversial issues.²³

Coan compared the attitudes of parents and social studies teachers in Kansas on the inclusion of controversial issues in the secondary school program. His major findings included these ideas:

(1) The community would approve the inclusion of controversial issues in the social studies curriculum. (2) Social studies teachers can introduce the study of controversial issues to a greater extent than they have in the past and with less fear of reprisals than is generally assumed to be true. (3) A written policy concerning the teaching of controversial issues would be quite desirable.²⁴

Lunstrum attempted to define the proper role of the secondary school social studies teacher in the utilization of controversial issues. His research supported the following ideas: (1) Education is required to critically transmit the cultural heritage. (2) The secondary school social studies curriculum should feature the frequent and planned use of controversial issues. (3) Teachers and the community should be free from the demands of pressure groups in curriculum planning. (4) There should be formulated a written policy governing the treatment of controversial issues.²⁵

²³Ibid., pp. 285-287.

²⁴Clark Coan, op. cit., pp. 248-252.

²⁵John Paul Lunstrum, op. cit.

III SUMMARY

Chapter III has presented a summary of related literature dealing with the teaching of controversial issues.

References were made to various writers who were generally critical of the present approach to controversial issues in the social studies curriculum in general, in textbooks and other reference materials used in social studies, and in teacher training courses.

Several related studies on the teaching of controversial issues were briefly discussed which attempted to justify the place of controversial issues in the curriculum as well as to point out the present inadequacy in dealing with controversial issues.

CHAPTER IV

DESCRIPTION OF THE STUDY GROUP

In setting up the study, attempt was made to secure the cooperation of every public high school social studies teacher in the City of Edmonton. In response to the request made for cooperation, fifty teachers, out of approximately seventy-five public high school social studies teachers, indicated their willingness to cooperate in the study. From this number, a total of forty-five was used as the study. The others were not used, either because they did not fit the definition of social studies teachers as used in this study, or else they were unavailable for interviewing due to illness. The final total of forty-five is approximately sixty per cent of the high school social studies teachers in the Edmonton Public School System.

A summary of pertinent data concerning the teachers who were interviewed is given in Table I.

TABLE I
DATA CONCERNING THE STUDY GROUP

N=45		Sex		University training (years)			Teaching experience (yrs.)		
No.	Pct.	M	F	Four	Five	More than Five	0-5	6-10	More than 10
37	82	12	13			20	16	15	14
8	18	27	29			44	36	33	31

The teachers interviewed had considerable professional training as shown in Table I. None of the teachers interviewed had less than four years of university training, while nearly half the group had more than five full years of university training. Also, the group represents a variety of teaching experience, as indicated in Table I.

In addition to knowing these basic facts about the teachers interviewed, it will be useful to see what relationship exists between years of university training and years of teaching experience in the group. The relationship between years of university training and years of teaching experience in the group is given in Table II.

TABLE II
THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN TRAINING AND EXPERIENCE
IN THE STUDY GROUP

		University training (years)		
		Four	Five	More than Five
Teaching Experience (years)	0-5	8	6	2
	6-10	3	5	7
	More than 10	1	2	11

The two largest groups in the teachers interviewed was the one with more than five years of training and more than ten years of teaching experience, and the one with four years of training and five years or less of teaching experience. The relatively few teachers with more

than five years of training and five or less years of teaching experience could be explained by the fact that most teachers start teaching with five years of training or less, and then continue their education through summer courses, evening courses, or courses taken by returning to university for a full session. This conclusion would also seem to be supported by the relatively few teachers in the group with four years of training and more than six years of teaching experience, and those teachers with five years of training and more than ten years of teaching experience.

The grade levels taught by the teachers are shown in Table III.

TABLE III
GRADE LEVELS TAUGHT BY THE STUDY GROUP

N=45	Social studies class taught ^a			
	Social Studies 10	Social Studies 20	Social Studies 30	Social Studies 33(35)
No. Pct.	34 76	34 76	28 62	8 18

^aAny one teacher could be teaching at more than one grade level.

The three major classes of social studies were almost equally represented in the group as shown in Table III. The discrepancy in representation between Social Studies 33(35) and the other three social studies courses can be explained by the fact that the former is being offered in some of the high schools on an experimental basis to Grade

Twelve students who are not on a matriculation pattern. Therefore, the actual number of classes of Social Studies 33(35) being taught and the number of teachers involved in teaching it will be fewer than for the other three social studies classes.

In summing up this description of the teachers interviewed, the following points seem pertinent:

1. The group used was a majority of the high school teachers teaching social studies in the Edmonton Public School System at the time the study was undertaken.
2. The group illustrated a variety of combinations of professional training and teaching experience.
3. The group represented the various levels of social studies taught in the public high schools.

CHAPTER V

AN ANALYSIS OF THE RESPONSES EDMONTON PUBLIC HIGH SCHOOL SOCIAL STUDIES TEACHERS MADE CONCERNING THE TEACHING OF CONTROVERSIAL ISSUES

The data presented in this chapter summarizes the responses the social studies teachers gave to questions concerning their opinions and practices in relation to the teaching of controversial issues, as well as factors which might influence the actual teaching of controversial issues. The teachers were also encouraged to add comments wherever they believed their answer required elaboration. A selection of these comments will be presented for the various questions.

The responses to the various questions will be summarized in tabular form accompanied by a brief description. In addition, illustrative comments made by the respondents will be presented following the tabular material.

The material in this chapter will be presented in two sections. The first section will give an analysis of the responses made, and the second section will summarize the responses.

I. ANALYSIS OF RESPONSES

The Place of Controversial Issues in the Social Studies Curriculum

Question One (See Appendix) attempted to determine the opinions of Edmonton public high school social studies teachers concerning the place of controversial issues in the secondary school social studies curriculum.

The responses made by the study group to Question One are summarized in Table IV.

TABLE IV
OPINIONS CONCERNING THE PLACE OF CONTROVERSIAL
ISSUES IN THE HIGH SCHOOL SOCIAL STUDIES CURRICULUM

N=45	School has a definite obligation	Desirable, but not obligatory	Issues meeting with local disapproval must be avoided	Only a limited place for controversial issues	Primary function is to teach facts and principles
No. Pct.	30 67	10 22	4 9	1 2	0 0

Sixty-seven per cent of the study group responded that the school was obligated to provide for the coverage of controversial issues, twenty-two per cent replied that it was desirable but not obligatory, nine per cent responded that controversial issues meeting with local disapproval must be avoided, and two per cent of the group responded that controversial issues have only a limited place in the high school social studies curriculum. None responded that the primary function of the social studies curriculum is to teach facts and principles.

The responses to Question One indicate that all of the group believed that controversial issues should have some recognition in the high school social studies curriculum. A majority of the teachers responded that the school was obligated to provide for the study of con-

troversial issues in the high school social studies curriculum.

Comments given for Question One included the following:

1. "Social studies should be approached from a problem-solving viewpoint. This in itself necessitates presenting both sides of a problem and as such involves conflicts and controversies."
2. "The manner in which controversy is discussed is more important to acceptability by the community and to stimulating pupil understanding than the mere provision of such discussion."
3. "A teacher is a servant of the community, engaged by local people to teach local children. He must, therefore, take into consideration the needs of the community. It is conceivable that certain topics would be considered taboo by the community, and this taboo should be respected by the teacher."

The Frequency With Which Controversial Issues are Covered

Question Two (See Appendix) attempted to determine the frequency with which controversial issues are covered by Edmonton public high school social studies teachers. The responses made by the study group to Question Two are summarized in Table V.

TABLE V
THE FREQUENCY OF COVERAGE OF CONTROVERSIAL
ISSUES IN SOCIAL STUDIES CLASSES

N=45	Every significant controversial issue	Controversial issues related to classroom work	Controversial issues are rarely considered	Controversial issues are not discussed
No. Pet.	7 16	36 80	2 4	0 0

As indicated in Table V, sixteen per cent of the group responded that they dealt with every significant controversial issue, eighty per cent responded that they covered only those controversial issues related to the material being studied in the classroom, and four per cent responded that they rarely considered controversial issues in their classroom. None responded that controversial issues were not discussed.

The responses to Question Two indicate that more than three-quarters of the study group cover those controversial issues which are related to material being covered in the classroom.

Comments given for Question Two included the following:

1. "The pressures of common exams restrict the time which could be used to study controversial issues."
2. "I checked 'C' because pressure of course material makes it difficult to devote much time to the discussion of controversial issues. However, I do not agree with the second part of the statement. Because there is no definite answer for issues is no reason for not discussing them."
3. "Within the social studies curriculum as it presently exists, serious limitations particularly as regards to the time element arise. We are being bound to common exams which produce pressures to cover certain amounts of material within prescribed time limits. I have far too little time available to deal with controversial issues to any great depth."
4. "Adequate development of such topics is impossible given the amount of material that must be covered for common exams. In such circumstances the teacher cannot adequately discuss controversial issues."
5. "The curriculum guidelines as well as the lack of time make it difficult to discuss controversial issues thoroughly unless they are related to what is being taught."

Controversial Issues Which Should be Covered in the Classroom

Question Three (See Appendix) attempted to determine the number of

controversial issues which could be found within the existing curriculum that social studies teachers believed ought to be included as a part of classroom work in social studies. Question Three also asked the teachers to list those issues they believed should be discussed.

The responses made to the first part of Question Three are summarized in Table VI.

TABLE VI
OPINIONS CONCERNING THE NUMBER OF CONTROVERSIAL ISSUES WHICH CAN BE FOUND
IN THE PRESENT SOCIAL STUDIES CURRICULUM THAT OUGHT TO BE COVERED

N=45	Many	Few	None	Listed specific issues	Did not list specific issues
No. Pct.	31 69	14 31	0 0	38 84	7 16

Sixty-nine per cent of the study group responded that there were many controversial issues within the present social studies curriculum, and thirty-one per cent of the group responded that there were few controversial issues within the present curriculum which ought to be covered. None of the group responded there were no controversial issues which ought to be studied. Also, as indicated in Table VI, eighty-four per cent of the group was able to list specific controversial issues which ought to be studied, while sixteen per cent did not list specific issues which should be covered.

The number of controversial issues that were mentioned as deserving of discussion, as well as the number of times each particular issue was mentioned, are given in Table VII.

TABLE VII

OPINIONS CONCERNING CONTROVERSIAL ISSUES IN THE
PRESENT SOCIAL STUDIES CURRICULUM REQUIRING COVERAGE

<u>Issues</u>	<u>Number of Times Mentioned</u>
I. Historical/political Issues	
1. Comparative study of political systems	12
2. Communism	9
3. The Cold War	5
4. French-English relations in Canada	5
5. Imperialism	3
6. Expansion of American influence after World War II	3
7. Disarmament	3
8. Revolutionary movements	2
9. Historical development of the Christian church	2
10. Canadian-American relations	2
11. Control of nuclear development	2
12. Contemporary nationalism in Asia and Africa	2
13. Internationalism vs. nationalism	1
14. Treaties ending World War I and World War II	1
15. Major steps in Canadian constitutional history	1
16. The United Nations	1
17. The Commonwealth	1
18. The position of contemporary China	1
19. Canada's role in military alliances	1
II. Economic Issues	
1. Development of the welfare state	9
2. Comparative study of economic systems	8
3. Marxian socialism	4
4. Influence of unions in contemporary society	2
5. Automation	1
6. Control of inflation	1
7. The use of foreign aid	1

TABLE VII (continued)

<u>Issues</u>	<u>Number of Times Mentioned</u>
III. Ethical/moral Issues	
1. Morality in government	11
2. Development of value systems	9
3. Business ethics	2
4. National morality	2
5. Sexual morals in contemporary society	1
IV. Social Issues	
1. The problem of overpopulation	12
2. Rights and privileges of minority groups	9
3. The concept of race	3
4. The influence of advertising and mass communication	2
5. Human rights	2
6. Capital punishment	2
7. Censorship	1
8. Influence of ethnocentrism in history	1
9. Immigration policies	1
10. Influence of dominant minorities in society	1
11. Extremism in contemporary society	1
V. Miscellaneous Issues	
1. Comparative study of world religions	10
2. Evolution	4
3. Sectionalism in Canada	3

The responses made to Question Three indicate that a majority of the study group believed there were many controversial issues within the existing social studies curriculum which ought to be covered, and that these issues were of a variety of types, with those of a historical/political nature predominating.

Controversial Issues Which Ought Not to be Covered in the Classroom

Question Four (See Appendix) attempted to determine the existence

of controversial issues which Edmonton public high school social studies teachers believed should not be studied in the social studies classroom. The number of social studies teachers indicating specific controversial issues which they believed ought not to be covered in the social studies classroom is shown in Table VIII.

TABLE VIII
THE FREQUENCY WITH WHICH CONTROVERSIAL ISSUES UNSUITABLE FOR CLASS COVERAGE WERE LISTED BY THE STUDY GROUP

N=45	Listed specific issues which ought not to be dealt with	Did not list specific issues which ought not to be dealt with
No. Pct.		
	13 30	32 70

Thirty per cent of the study group listed specific controversial issues which ought to be covered in the social studies classroom, while seventy per cent of the teachers did not list specific issues which ought not to be covered.

The specific issues listed by the teachers as issues which should not be covered in the social studies classroom, as well as the number of times each issue was mentioned, is presented in Table IX.

TABLE IX
 OPINIONS CONCERNING CONTROVERSIAL ISSUES UNSUITABLE FOR COVERAGE
 IN THE SOCIAL STUDIES CLASSROOM

<u>Issue</u>	<u>Number of times mentioned</u>
1. Questions of religious faith	6
2. Personal or family difficulties	4
3. Problems of a sexual nature	4
4. Discussions of personal political affiliation	1

Questions of religious faith were mentioned as issues to be avoided six times, personal or family difficulties were mentioned four times, problems of a sexual nature were mentioned four times, and discussions of personal political affiliation was mentioned once.

The responses to Question Four indicate that two-thirds of the study group responded that there were no controversial issues which should be avoided in the social studies classroom. The issues that were mentioned as ones to be avoided were primarily in the areas of religious faith and personal social problems.

Sources From Which Controversial Issues Are Drawn

Question Five (See Appendix) attempted to determine the sources from which controversial issues are most frequently drawn by Edmonton public high school social studies teachers. The responses to Question Five are summarized in Table X. As more than one source could be checked, a total of 132 responses was made by the study group.

TABLE X
OPINIONS CONCERNING THE SOURCES OF CONTROVERSIAL ISSUES

N=132	Text books	Outside reading	Classroom discussion	Teacher suggestion	Mass communication media	Other sources
No.	13	20	31	24	41	3
Pct.	10	15	24	18	31	2

The mass-communication media was the leading source of controversial issues, receiving thirty-one per cent of the responses. Classroom discussion received twenty-four per cent of the responses, teacher suggestion received eighteen per cent of the responses, outside reading done by the students received fifteen per cent of the responses, the textbooks regularly used received ten per cent of the responses, and other sources received two per cent of the responses. Under the heading of other sources specific sources referred to were the following; young people's groups, tape recordings, and student experiences.

The responses for Question Five indicate that the study group utilized a variety of sources for the controversial issues taught, with the mass-communication media being the most-mentioned source.

Comments given for Question Five included the following:

1. "Textbooks are generally poor in developing controversial issues since a problems approach is not used."
2. "It is a pity that the textbooks appear to be deliberately non-controversial."
3. "Our textbooks are designed not to raise controversial issues,

but to give us a smug attitude towards the world. They seem to be designed to adjust the student rather than to make him think."

4. "A discussion of controversial issues is more useful and effective when it appears to the students that the issues were raised by the students themselves."
5. "The program 'This Hour Has Seven Days' has been a particularly important source of controversial issues."
6. "Practically all the other sources can be traced back to the mass-communication media."

Controversial Issues Actually Covered in the Classroom

Question Six (See Appendix) attempted to discover the controversial issues which had actually been covered by Edmonton public high school social studies teachers in the school year 1965-1966 up to April 1, 1966. The number of social studies teachers listing specific controversial issues which they have dealt with in the school year 1965-1966 is given in Table XI.

TABLE XI

THE NUMBER OF SOCIAL STUDIES TEACHERS LISTING SPECIFIC CONTROVERSIAL ISSUES WHICH THEY HAVE COVERED IN THE SCHOOL YEAR 1965-1966

N=45	Listed specific issues dealt with in the classroom	Did not list specific issues dealt with in the classroom
No. Pct.		
	42 93	3 ?

Ninety-three per cent of the group listed specific controversial issues which they have covered, while seven per cent did not list specific issues which they have covered.

The actual controversial issues covered, as well as the number of times each controversial issue was mentioned, is given in Table XII. Also shown in Table XII is the time spent in the coverage of the various issues.

Sixty-two different controversial issues were reported as having been covered, with many issues reported by more than one teacher. The issues most often reported included the war in Vietnam which was mentioned nineteen times, morality in government which was mentioned twelve times, and Rhodesian independence and Communism which were each mentioned nine times.

Out of the total of 186 controversial issues reported, eighty-one, or forty-four per cent of the total were covered in one period or less, eighty-three, or forty-five per cent of the total were covered in from two to five periods, thirteen issues or six per cent of the total were covered in from six to ten periods, and nine issues, or five per cent of the total required more than ten periods for coverage.

The responses for Question Six indicate that a majority of the study group listed controversial issues which they had actually covered in the school year 1965-1966. These issues were of a variety of types and the majority of them were covered in five periods or less.

Comments given for Question Six included the following:

TABLE XII

CONTROVERSIAL ISSUES COVERED BY EDMONTON PUBLIC HIGH SCHOOL
SOCIAL STUDIES TEACHERS IN THE SCHOOL YEAR 1965-1966

Issue	Times Mentioned	Length of study (periods)				More than ten
		Less than one	1	2-5	6-10	
I. Historical/Political Issues.						
1. The war in Vietnam	19	0	9	10	10	
2. Rhodesian independence	9	1	6	0	2	
3. Communism	9	0	1	5	2	1
4. Civil war in the Dominican Republic	7	0	5	2	0	0
5. The Cold War	6	0	0	4	0	2
6. Comparative political systems	5	0	0	3	2	0
7. Protestant Reformation	3	0	0	1	0	2
8. Canadian federal election	3	0	1	0	0	2
9. Analysis of political platforms	3	0	0	0	3	0
10. Sino-Soviet dispute	2	0	2	0	0	0
11. Control of nuclear weapons	2	0	2	0	0	0
12. Nationalism	2	0	0	2	0	0
13. American imperialism	1	0	1	0	0	0
14. Military Alliances	1	0	0	1	0	0
15. Democracy in emerging nations	1	0	0	1	0	0
16. American foreign policy	1	0	0	1	0	0
17. Canadian nationalism	1	0	0	1	0	0
18. The importance of NATO	1	0	0	1	0	0
19. The strength of the United Nations	1	0	0	1	0	0
20. Recognition of Red China	1	0	1	0	0	0
21. Disarmament	1	0	0	1	0	0
22. Causes of World War I & World War II	1	0	0	1	0	0

TABLE XII (continued)

Issue	Times Mentioned	Length of study (periods)				More than ten
		Less than one	1	2-5	6-10	
II. Social Issues						
1. Racial discrimination	10	2	1	1	7	
2. The problem of overpopulation	7	1	3	3	3	0
3. The rights of minority groups	5	0	2	3	0	0
4. Separatism	3	0	1	2	0	0
5. Bilingualism and Biculturalism in Canada	2	0	0	2	0	0
6. Censorship	2	0	2	0	0	0
7. Governmental control in contemporary society	2	0	0	2	0	0
8. Capital punishment	2	1	1	0	0	0
9. Civil rights movements	2	1	1	0	0	0
10. Teen-age drinking	1	0	1	0	0	0
11. Class structure in contemporary society	1	0	0	1	0	0
12. Teen-age marriage	1	0	1	0	0	0
13. Influence of the news media	1	0	1	0	0	0
14. Justice in contemporary society	1	0	1	0	0	0
III. Ethical/Moral Issues						
1. Morality in government	12	1	9	2	0	0
2. Development of value systems	5	0	1	3	1	0
3. Public apathy	2	0	2	0	0	0
4. Morality in contemporary society	2	0	1	1	0	0
5. Unethical business practices	1	0	1	0	0	0

TABLE XII (continued)

Issue	Times Mentioned	Length of study (periods)				More than ten
		Less than one	1	2-5	6-10	
IV. Religious Issues						
1. Religious intolerance	7	0	4	3	0	0
2. Comparative study of great religions	4	0	0	3	0	1
3. Comparison of ancient and contemporary religions	1	0	1	0	0	0
4. Origins of religion in human society	1	0	1	0	0	0
5. Religion in contemporary society	1	0	0	1	0	0
V. Economic Issues						
1. Socialism in Canada	5	0	1	4	0	0
2. Canada's economic independence	3	0	2	1	0	0
3. Marxian Socialism	3	0	0	3	0	0
4. Socialism vs. capitalism	2	0	0	2	0	0
5. Foreign investment in Canada	2	0	1	1	0	0
6. Comparative economic theories	2	0	0	0	1	1
7. Credit buying	1	0	1	0	0	0
8. Financing local government	1	0	0	1	0	0
9. Medicare	1	0	1	0	0	0
VI. Miscellaneous Issues						
1. Evolution	3	0	1	2	0	0
2. The causes of war	2	0	0	2	0	0
3. Fluoridation	1	1	0	0	0	0
4. Canadian-U.S. relations	1	0	1	0	0	0
5. Nationalism vs. internationalism	1	0	0	0	1	0
6. Union of Canada and the U.S.A.	1	0	1	0	0	0
Totals	186	8	73	83	13	9

1. "Most topics are considered if introduced by a student or when the pattern of the course leads to consideration."
2. "It is difficult to list all issues dealt with so far or to assign approximate times devoted to them because we like to deal with them as they come up. Sometimes this is quite spontaneous, sometimes incidental to topics under discussion. All classes are involved and the method used is mainly discussion."
3. "It is difficult to list all issues covered and time spent on them as the issues are discussed from time to time as a result of student initiative or reaction to an incident or comment."
4. "The discussion of controversial issues is an integral part of class periods and it is difficult to ascribe particular times to specific topics."

Factors Which Hinder or Restrict the Coverage of Controversial Issues

Question Seven (See Appendix) attempted to determine which blocks or obstacles in the opinion of Edmonton public high school social studies teachers prevented them from dealing with controversial issues to the extent which they desired. The responses to Question Seven are summarized in Table XIII. As more than one source could be checked, the total number of responses for the question was 106.

TABLE XIII
OPINIONS CONCERNING FACTORS WHICH HINDER THE TEACHING OF CONTROVERSIAL ISSUES

Source of Pressure	N=106	
	No.	Pct.
A. Community or lay groups		
1. Economic	3	2
2. Political	4	4
3. Religious	15	14
4. Patriotic	4	4
5. Racial/minority	5	5

TABLE XIII (continued)

N=106

No. Pct.

Source of Pressure			
B. Parents	8	8	
C. Students	8	8	
D. School administrators	14	13	
E. Coverage of prescribed curriculum material	35	33	
F. Other sources	10	9	

The coverage of prescribed curriculum material was the most common pressure mentioned by the study group, receiving thirty-three per cent of the responses. The influences of religious groups was the second most common pressure, receiving fourteen per cent of the responses, while school administrators as a pressure group received thirteen per cent of the responses. Under the heading of other sources, specific ones mentioned were the following: development of accurate source materials, textbooks, experiences of fellow teachers, and teacher's lack of knowledge in a particular area.

The responses to Question Seven indicate that the study group believed that many pressures act to restrict the coverage of controversial issues in the social studies classroom, with the necessity to cover prescribed curriculum material being the dominating pressure.

Comments given for Question Seven included the following:

1. "Pressure comes from the necessity to cover prescribed material. The Social Studies 30 textbook misses many opportunities to be controversial."
2. "The community makeup should determine the approach to controversial issues."

3. "In Social Studies 10 and Social Studies 20, the pressure of time limits the time spent discussing controversial issues. Only in Social Studies 33 where there is no tight curriculum can I spend the time I would like to on controversial issues when the students are interested."
4. "Teachers are judged by the results of final exams which emphasize objective facts, and this situation would discourage serious study of controversial issues."
5. "Courses like Social Studies 10 and Social Studies 20 do not have the pressures associated with Social Studies 30."
6. "Teachers may not be absolutely limited by the curriculum, but since the courses appear to emphasize facts, we must be more ingenious to work controversial issues into the courses."

The Effect of Written Statements of Policy on the Coverage of Controversial Issues

Question Eight (See Appendix) attempted to determine teacher knowledge of the presence or absence of a written statement of policy from the Edmonton Public School Board concerning the teaching of controversial issues, and also attempted to determine what effect such a policy would or does have on the teacher's coverage of controversial issues. The responses made to the first part of Question Eight are summarized in Table XIV.

TABLE XIV

TEACHERS' KNOWLEDGE OF A WRITTEN STATEMENT OF POLICY ON THE TEACHING OF CONTROVERSIAL ISSUES

N=45	Policy exists	Policy does not exist	Uncertain
No. Pct.	1 2	18 40	26 58

Two per cent of the study group responded that such a policy existed, forty per cent responded that such a policy did not exist, and fifty-eight per cent were uncertain as to the existence of such a policy.

The responses made to the second part of Question Eight are summarized in Table XV.

TABLE XV
OPINIONS CONCERNING THE EFFECT A WRITTEN POLICY WOULD HAVE ON
THE TEACHING OF CONTROVERSIAL ISSUES

N=45	Positive effect	Negative effect	No effect
No. Pct.	15 33	6 13	24 54

Thirty-three per cent of the study group responded that such a policy would have a positive effect on their teaching of controversial issues, thirteen per cent responded that such a policy would have a negative effect, and fifty-four per cent responded that such a policy would have no effect on their teaching of controversial issues.

The responses to Question Eight indicate that a majority of the study group were uncertain as to the existence of a written statement of policy concerning the teaching of controversial issues, and further, a majority believed that such a written policy would have no effect on the present approach to controversial issues being used.

Comments given for Question Eight included the following:

1. "A written statement of policy is unnecessary. No written policy can promote a professional attitude."
2. "At the moment there appears to be very few restrictions. A written statement would provide barriers."
3. "I feel that the present situation should be left as is and not spelled out."
4. "Having a written statement of policy would give a clearer view as to how far one should pursue a certain issue or how it ought to be settled."
5. "A written statement of policy would have little effect on my teaching because I teach within the framework of my professional code of ethics and my own sense of values."
6. "A written statement would be good if it guaranteed academic freedom, but any written policy is most likely to be restrictive."
7. "Such a written policy would give the teacher some basis for his approach to the teaching of controversial issues."

II. SUMMARY

The following points summarize the major findings presented in Chapter V concerning the teaching of controversial issues by Edmonton public high school social studies teachers.

1. A majority of the study group responded that the school was obligated to provide for the study of controversial issues in the high school social studies curriculum.

2. A majority of the study group claim to cover only those controversial issues which are directly related to material being covered in the classroom.

3. A majority of the study group responded that there were many

controversial issues within the existing social studies curriculum which ought to be covered, and that these issues were of a variety of types, with those of a historical/political nature predominating.

4. A majority of the study group responded that there were no controversial issues which should be avoided in the social studies classroom. The issues that were mentioned as ones to be avoided were primarily in the areas of religious faith and personal social problems.

5. The study group claimed to utilize a variety of sources for the controversial issues taught, with the mass-communication media being the most-mentioned source.

6. A majority of the study group listed controversial issues which they had actually covered in the school year 1965-1966. These issues were of a variety of types and the majority of them were covered in five periods or less.

7. The study group responded that many pressures act to restrict the coverage of controversial issues in the social studies classroom, with the necessity to cover prescribed curriculum material being the dominating pressure.

8. A majority of the study group were uncertain as to the existence of a written statement of policy concerning the teaching of controversial issues, and further, a majority responded that such a written policy would have no effect on the present approach to controversial issues being used.

CHAPTER VI

AN ANALYSIS OF THE RESPONSES EDMONTON PUBLIC HIGH SCHOOL SOCIAL STUDIES TEACHERS (CLASSIFIED ACCORDING TO UNIVERSITY TRAINING AND TEACHING EXPERIENCE) MADE CONCERNING THE TEACHING OF CONTROVERSIAL ISSUES

The data presented in this chapter is an analysis of the responses made by the study group classified according to number of years of university training and number of years of teaching experience. The purpose of such an analysis is to determine, if possible, the extent to which these variables have any influence on the manner in which the teachers responded to the questions.

The material in this chapter is presented in two sections. The first section presents a tabular analysis of the responses accompanied by a brief description, and the second section summarizes the main points of the analysis.

I. ANALYSIS OF RESPONSES ACCORDING TO NUMBER OF YEARS OF UNIVERSITY TRAINING AND NUMBER OF YEARS OF TEACHING EXPERIENCE

The Place of Controversial Issues in the Social Studies Classroom

Years of University training. An analysis of the responses made to Question One (classified according to number of years of university training) is given in Table XVI.

University training seemed to have little bearing on responses made to Question One. More than half of the teachers at each level of

university training supported the view that the school has a definite obligation to provide for the coverage of controversial issues.

TABLE XVI
OPINIONS CONCERNING THE PLACE OF CONTROVERSIAL ISSUES IN THE CURRICULUM
(UNIVERSITY TRAINING GROUPS)

N=45	School has a definite obligation	Desirable, but not obligatory	Issues meeting with local disapproval must be avoided	Only a limited place for controversial issues	Primary function is to teach facts and principles
University training (years)					
Four					
No.	8	67	3	0	1
Pct.			25	0	8
Five					
No.	9	69	4	0	0
Pct.			31	0	0
More than Five					
No.	13	65	3	4	0
Pct.			15	20	0

Years of Teaching experience. An analysis of the responses made to Question One (classified according to number of years of teaching experience) is given in Table XVII.

TABLE XVII
OPINIONS CONCERNING THE PLACE OF CONTROVERSIAL ISSUES IN THE CURRICULUM
(TEACHING EXPERIENCE GROUPS)

N=45	School has a definite obligation	Desirable, but not obligatory	Issues meeting with local disapproval must be avoided	Only a limited place for controversial issues	Primary function is to teach facts and principles
Teaching experience (years)					
0-5					
No.	12	4	0	0	0
Pct.	75	25	0	0	0
6-10					
No.	10	3	2	0	0
Pct.	67	20	13	0	0
More than 10					
No.	8	3	2	1	0
Pct.	57	22	14	7	0

Teaching experience seemed to have some bearing on the manner in which respondents answered Question One. More than half of the teachers at each level of teaching experience supported the view that the school has a definite obligation to provide for the coverage of controversial issues. However, with each successive level of teaching experience, the majority supporting the above position declined and other alternatives received support.

The Frequency With Which Controversial Issues are Covered

Years of University training. An analysis of the responses to Question Two (classified according to number of years of university training) is given in Table XVIII.

TABLE XVIII
THE FREQUENCY OF COVERAGE OF CONTROVERSIAL ISSUES IN SOCIAL STUDIES
CLASSES (UNIVERSITY TRAINING GROUPS)

N=45	Every significant controversial issue	Controversial issues related to classroom work	Controversial issues are rarely considered	Controversial issues are not covered
University training (years)				
Four				
No.	2	10	0	0
Pct.	17	83	0	0
Five				
No.	2	9	2	0
Pct.	15	70	15	0
More than Five				
No.	3	17	0	0
Pct.	15	85	0	0

Years of university training seemed to have little influence on the responses made to Question Two. More than two-thirds of the study group at each level of university training responded that only

controversial issues related to classroom work are covered.

Years of teaching experience. An analysis of the responses made to Question Two (classified according to number of years of teaching experience) is given in Table XIX.

TABLE XIX
THE FREQUENCY OF COVERAGE OF CONTROVERSIAL ISSUES IN SOCIAL STUDIES CLASSES (TEACHING EXPERIENCE GROUPS)

N=45	Every significant controversial issue	Controversial issues related to classroom work	Controversial issues are rarely considered	Controversial issues are not covered
Teaching experience (years)				
0-5				
No.	2	12	14	0
Pct.			88	0
6-10				
No.	3	20	10	2
Pct.			67	13
More than 10				
No.	2	14	12	0
Pct.			86	0

Years of teaching experience seemed to have little effect on the responses made to Question Two. More than two-thirds of the teachers at each level of teaching experience responded that they

covered only those controversial issues related to classroom work.

Controversial Issues Which Should be Covered in the Classroom

The analysis of responses made concerning the number of controversial issues which ought to be covered (classified according to number of years of university training) is given in Table XX.

TABLE XX
OPINIONS CONCERNING THE NUMBER OF CONTROVERSIAL ISSUES WHICH CAN BE FOUND IN THE PRESENT SOCIAL STUDIES CURRICULUM THAT OUGHT TO BE COVERED (UNIVERSITY TRAINING GROUPS)

N=45	Many	Few	None	Listed specific issues	Did not list specific issues
University training (years)					
Four No. Pct.	8 67	4 33	0 0	9 75	3 25
Five No. Pct.	8 62	5 38	0 0	11 85	2 15
More than Five No. Pct.	15 75	5 25	0 0	18 90	2 10

Years of university training seemed to have little bearing on responses made to Question Three. A majority of the teachers at each

level of university training responded that there were many controversial issues in the present curriculum which ought to be covered. In addition, three-quarters or more of the teachers at each level of training were able to list specific issues. The percentage listing issues increased with each successive level of university training.

The analysis of responses made concerning the number of controversial issues which ought to be covered (classified according to number of years of teaching experience) is given in Table XXI.

TABLE XXI
OPINIONS CONCERNING THE NUMBER OF CONTROVERSIAL ISSUES WHICH CAN BE FOUND IN THE PRESENT SOCIAL STUDIES CURRICULUM THAT OUGHT TO BE COVERED (TEACHING EXPERIENCE GROUPS)

N=45	Many	Few	None	Listed specific issues	Did not list specific issues
Teaching experience (years)					
0-5					
No.	13	3	0	13	3
Pct.	81	19	0	81	19
6-10					
No.	10	5	0	13	2
Pct.	67	33	0	87	13
More than 10					
No.	8	6	0	12	2
Pct.	57	43	0	86	14

Years of teaching experience seemed to have some bearing on responses made to Question Three. A majority of teachers at each level of teaching experience responded that there were many controversial issues in the present curriculum which ought to be covered. This majority decreased with each successive level of teaching experience. In addition, a majority of teachers at each level of experience were able to list specific controversial issues requiring discussion.

The actual controversial issues listed by the teachers, classified according to years of university training and years of teaching experience, is given in Table XXII.

Years of university training seemed to have some bearing on the number of controversial issues reported. Teachers with more than five years of training reported fifty-five per cent of the issues, teachers with five years of training reported twenty-four per cent of the issues, and teachers with four years of training reported twenty-one per cent of the issues.

Years of teaching experience did not seem to have much influence on the number of controversial issues reported. Thirty-nine per cent of the issues were reported by teachers having more than ten years of teaching experience, thirty-two per cent of the issues were reported by teachers with five or fewer years of experience, and twenty-nine per cent of the issues were reported by teachers with from six to ten years teaching experience.

TABLE XXII

OPINIONS CONCERNING CONTROVERSIAL ISSUES IN THE PRESENT SOCIAL STUDIES CURRICULUM REQUIRING COVERAGE
 (UNIVERSITY TRAINING AND TEACHING EXPERIENCE GROUPS)

Description of Issue	University training (years)			Teaching experience (years)		
	Four	Five	More than five	0-5	6-10	More than ten
Times mentioned						
A. Historical/Political Issues						
1. Comparative study of political systems	1	2	9	3	2	7
2. Communism	2	1	6	2	3	4
3. The Cold War	1	2	2	1	2	2
4. French-English relations in Canada	1	2	2	2	2	2
5. Imperialism	0	2	1	1	0	2
6. Expansion of American influence after World War II	1	1	1	0	2	1
7. Disarmament	0	1	2	1	1	1
8. Revolutionary movements	1	0	1	1	0	1
9. Historical development of the Christian church	1	1	0	1	1	0
10. Canadian-American relations	0	0	2	0	2	0
11. Nuclear development	0	0	2	0	1	1
12. Contemporary nationalism in Asia & Africa	1	0	1	1	1	1
13. Internationalism vs. nationalism	0	0	1	0	0	1
14. Treaties ending W.W. I and W. W. II	0	0	1	0	0	1
15. Canadian constitutional history	0	0	1	0	0	1
16. The United Nations	0	0	1	0	0	1
17. The Commonwealth	0	0	1	0	0	1
18. The position of contemporary China	0	0	1	0	0	1
19. Canada's role in military alliances	0	0	1	0	0	1

TABLE XXII (continued)

Description of Issues	University training (years)			Teaching experience (years)		
	Four	Five	More than five	0-5	6-10	More than ten
Times mentioned						Times mentioned
B. Economic Issues						
1. Comparative study of economic systems	3	1	4	3	2	3
2. Development of the welfare state	1	2	6	3	3	3
3. Marxian socialism	2	2	0	2	2	0
4. Unions in contemporary society	0	1	1	0	0	2
5. Automation	0	1	0	1	0	0
6. Control of inflation	0	1	0	0	0	1
7. Use of foreign aid	0	1	0	1	0	0
C. Social Issues						
1. Overpopulation	3	4	5	6	2	4
2. Rights of minority groups	2	1	6	3	3	3
3. Sectionalism in Canada	1	1	1	1	1	1
4. The concept of race	1	1	1	0	1	2
5. Influence of advertising and mass communication media	1	0	1	1	1	0
6. Human rights	0	0	2	1	0	1
7. Capital punishment	0	0	2	1	1	0
8. Censorship	0	0	1	0	1	0
9. Influence of ethnocentrism in history	1	0	0	0	1	0
10. Immigration policies	0	0	1	0	1	0
11. Influence of dominant minorities in contemporary society	1	0	0	0	1	0
12. Extremism in contemporary society	1	0	0	0	1	0

TABLE XXII (continued)

Description of Issues	University training (years)			Teaching experience (years)		
	Four	Five	More than five	0-5	6-10	More than ten
Times mentioned						Times mentioned
D. Ethical/Moral Issues						
1. Morality in government	2	3	6	5	3	3
2. Development of value systems	3	2	4	3	3	
3. Business ethics	1	0	1	1	0	1
4. National morality	0	0	2	0	1	1
5. Sexual morals in contemporary society	0	0	1	0	1	0
E. Miscellaneous Issues						
1. Comparative study of world religions	2	3	5	6	1	3
2. Evolution	0	2	2	2	1	1
Totals	34	38	88	52	46	62

Controversial Issues Which Ought Not to be Covered in the Classroom

Years of university training. The number of teachers (classified according to number of years of university training) indicating specific controversial issues not suitable for coverage in the social studies classroom is given in Table XXIII.

TABLE XXIII
THE FREQUENCY WITH WHICH CONTROVERSIAL ISSUES UNSUITABLE FOR CLASS COVERAGE WERE LISTED (UNIVERSITY TRAINING GROUPS)

N=45	Listed issues	Did not list issues	No issues should be avoided
University training (years)			
Four			
No.	2	0	10
Pct.	17	0	83
Five			
No.	1	1	11
Pct.	8	8	84
More than Five			
No.	10	2	8
Pct.	50	10	40

Years of university training seemed to influence the frequency with which unsuitable controversial issues were listed. Half of the teachers with more than five years of training listed issues which

ought not to be covered. At the other levels of training, a majority of the teachers responded that there were no issues which should be avoided.

The actual issues mentioned, along with the number of times they were mentioned, are given in Table XXIV.

TABLE XXIV
OPINIONS CONCERNING CONTROVERSIAL ISSUES UNSUITABLE FOR COVERAGE IN
THE SOCIAL STUDIES CLASSROOM (UNIVERSITY TRAINING GROUPS)

Issue	University training (yrs.)		
	Four	Five	More than five
1. Questions of religious faith	0	0	6
2. Personal or family problems	1	1	2
3. Problems of a sexual nature	0	0	4
4. Questions of personal political affiliation	1	0	0

Questions of religious faith were mentioned six times by teachers with more than five years of training and problems of a sexual nature were mentioned four times by teachers with more than five years of training.

Years of teaching experience. The number of teachers (classified according to number of years of teaching experience) indicating specific controversial issues not suitable for coverage in the social studies classroom is given in Table XXV.

TABLE XXV

THE FREQUENCY WITH WHICH CONTROVERSIAL ISSUES UNSUITABLE FOR CLASS
COVERAGE WERE LISTED (TEACHING EXPERIENCE GROUPS)

N=45	Listed issues	Did not list issues	No issues should be avoided
Teaching experience (years)			
0-5 No. Pct.	2 12	0 0	14 88
6-10 No. Pct.	3 20	1 7	11 73
More than 10 No. Pct.	8 58	2 14	4 28

Years of teaching experience seemed to influence the frequency with which unsuitable controversial issues were listed. A majority of teachers with more than ten years of experience listed issues which ought not to be covered. A majority of teachers at the other two levels of experience responded that there were no issues which should be avoided. The percentage of teachers responding that no issues should be avoided decreased with each successive level of experience.

The actual issues mentioned, along with the number of times they were mentioned, are given in Table XXVI.

TABLE XXVI
OPINIONS CONCERNING CONTROVERSIAL ISSUES UNSUITABLE FOR COVERAGE IN
THE SOCIAL STUDIES CLASSROOM (TEACHING EXPERIENCE GROUPS)

Issue	Teaching experience (yrs.)		
	0-5	6-10	More than ten
1. Questions of religious faith	0	3	3
2. Personal or family problems	1	0	3
3. Problems of a sexual nature	0	1	3
4. Questions of personal political affiliation	1	0	0

Teachers with more than ten years of experience mentioned questions of religious faith, personal or family problems, and problems of a sexual nature three times each. Teachers with from six to ten years of experience mentioned questions of religious faith three times.

Sources From Which Controversial Issues are Drawn

Years of university training. The number of teachers (classified according to number of years of university training) indicating sources of controversial issues is given in Table XXVII. More than one source could be indicated by any one teacher.

Years of university training seemed to have some influence on identifying sources of controversial issues. Teachers with more than five years of training identified more sources of controversial issues

issues than did the other two levels of training. Teachers with more than five years of training and those with five years of training mentioned that the mass-communication media were their most common source of controversial issues, while teachers with four years of training listed classroom discussion as their most common source.

TABLE XXVII
OPINIONS CONCERNING THE SOURCES OF CONTROVERSIAL ISSUES (UNIVERSITY TRAINING GROUPS)

Source	University training (years)		
	Four	Five	More than five
	Times mentioned		
Textbooks	4	4	5
Outside reading	5	6	9
Classroom discussion	10	10	11
Teacher suggestion	7	8	9
Mass communication media	9	12	20
Other sources	0	0	3
Total	35	40	57

Years of teaching experience. The number of teachers (classified according to number of years of teaching experience) indicating sources of controversial issues is given in Table XXVIII. More than one source could be indicated by any one teacher.

TABLE XXVIII
OPINIONS CONCERNING THE SOURCES OF CONTROVERSIAL ISSUES (TEACHING
EXPERIENCE GROUPS)

Source	Teaching experience (years)		
	0-5	6-10	More than 10
Textbooks	2	5	6
Outside reading	6	7	7
Classroom discussion	12	11	8
Teacher suggestion	10	9	5
Mass communication media	14	14	13
Other sources	<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>2</u>
Total	45	46	41

Years of teaching experience seemed to have little bearing on identifying sources of controversial issues. Teachers at all levels of teaching experience indicated that the mass-communication media was the leading source of controversial issues. All levels of teaching experience reported approximately the same number of sources of controversial issues.

Controversial Issues Actually Covered in the Classroom

The controversial issues covered by the sample (classified according to university training and teaching experience) in the school year 1965-1966 is given in Table XXIX.

TABLE XXIX

CONTROVERSIAL ISSUES COVERED IN THE SCHOOL YEAR 1965-1966

UNIVERSITY TRAINING AND TEACHING EXPERIENCE GROUPS)

Description of Issues	University training (years)			Teaching experience (years)		
	Four Five	Five More than Five	More than Five	0-5	6-10	More than ten
A. Historical/Political Issues						Times mentioned
1. Vietnam	5	3	11	5	8	6
2. Rhodesia	2	3	4	5	3	1
3. Communism	2	1	6	2	4	3
4. The Dominican Republic	2	2	3	1	3	3
5. The Cold War	1	3	2	2	2	2
6. Comparative political systems	1	2	2	2	2	2
7. Protestant Reformation	0	2	1	1	0	0
8. Canadian election	1	0	2	2	1	0
9. Analysis of political platforms	0	0	3	0	0	3
10. Sino-Soviet dispute	0	2	0	2	0	0
11. Nuclear control	1	0	1	0	1	1
12. Nationalism	0	1	1	0	0	2
13. American imperialism	0	0	0	0	0	1
14. Military alliances	0	0	1	1	0	0
15. Democracy in emerging nations	1	0	0	0	0	0
16. American foreign policy	0	1	0	1	0	0
17. Canadian nationalism	0	0	0	1	0	0
18. Importance of NATO	1	0	0	0	0	0
19. Strength of the U.N.	0	1	0	1	0	0
20. Recognition of Red China	0	0	0	1	0	1
21. Disarmament	0	0	0	0	0	0
22. Causes of World War I & World War II	1	0	0	1	0	0
23. Abolition of the Canadian Senate	0	1	1	0	0	0

TABLE XXIX (continued)

Description of Issues	University training (years)			Teaching experience (years)			
	Four	Five	More than five	0-5	6-10	More than ten	
B. Social Issues							
1. Racial discrimination	3	2		5	3	1	6
2. Overpopulation	3	1		3	2	2	2
3. Rights of minority groups	1	2		2	2	1	1
4. Separatism	1	0		2	0	1	2
5. Bilingualism & Biculturalism in Canada	1	0		1	0	1	1
6. Censorship	1	1	0	1	1	0	0
7. Governmental control in contemporary society	1	0		1	1	1	
8. Capital punishment	1	1	0	1	1	1	0
9. Civil rights movements	0	0		2	0	1	1
10. Teen-age drinking	0	0		1	0	1	0
11. Class structure in contemporary society	0	1	0	1	1	0	0
12. Teen-age marriage	0	1	0	1	1	0	0
13. Influence of the news media in contemporary society	0	0	1	0	0	1	0
14. Justice in contemporary society	0	0	1	0	0	1	0
C. Ethical/Moral Issues							
1. Morality in government	4	2		6	5	4	3
2. Development of value systems	1	2		2	3	1	1
3. Public apathy in contemporary society	1	0		1	1	1	1
4. Morality in contemporary society	0	1	1	1	0	2	0
5. Unethical business practices	1	0		0	1	0	0

TABLE XXIX (continued)

Description of Issues	University training (years)			Teaching experience (years)			More than ten
	Four	Five	More than five	0-5	6-10		
D. Religious Issues						Times mentioned	
1. Religious intolerance						4	1
2. Comparative study of great religions	2	2	3	2	1	1	1
3. Comparison of ancient and contemporary religions	1	1	2	2	1	1	2
4. Origins of religion	0	1	0	0	1	0	0
5. Religion in contemporary society	0	1	0	0	0	0	1
E. Economic Issues						3	2
1. Socialism in Canada	1	1	1	1	1	1	2
2. Canada's economic independence	1	0	2	2	1	1	0
3. Marxian socialism	1	2	0	1	2	1	2
4. Socialism vs. capitalism	0	1	1	0	2	0	0
5. Foreign investment in Canada	1	1	0	1	1	1	0
6. Comparative economic theories	1	1	0	1	1	1	0
7. Credit buying	0	0	1	0	0	1	0
8. Financing local government	1	0	0	1	0	0	0
9. Medicare	0	0	1	1	1	1	1
F. Miscellaneous Issues						1	1
1. Evolution	0	2	1	1	1	1	1
2. Causes of war	0	0	2	0	0	0	2
3. Fluoridation	0	0	1	0	0	1	0
4. Canadian-U.S. relations	0	0	1	0	0	1	0
5. Nationalism vs. internationalism	1	0	1	0	0	0	1
6. Union of Canada and the U.S.	0	1	0	1	0	1	0
Totals	<u>47</u>	<u>52</u>	<u>87</u>	<u>63</u>	<u>59</u>	<u>64</u>	

A summary of the number of issues reported by the teachers in Table XXIX and the time spent on these issues by the teachers (classified according to years of university training and years of teaching experience) is given in Table XXX.

TABLE XXX
TIME SPENT ON CONTROVERSIAL ISSUES (UNIVERSITY TRAINING GROUPS AND TEACHING EXPERIENCE GROUPS)

University training(yrs.) N=45	No. of issues		Time spent (periods)				
	reported	Per Teacher	Less than One	One	2-5	6-10	More than 10
Four	47	3.9(N=12)	3	16	23	3	2
Five	52	4.0(N=13)	1	14	30	4	3
More than Five	87	4.4(N=20)	4	43	30	6	4
Teaching experience (yrs.) N=45	No. of issues		Time spent (periods)				
	reported	Per Teacher	Less than One	One	2-5	6-10	More than 10
0-5	63	3.9(N=16)	2	22	31	5	3
6-10	64	4.3(N=15)	4	25	28	4	3
More than ten	59	4.2(N=14)	2	26	24	4	3

Years of university training seemed to have little or no bearing on the number of controversial issues covered. Teachers with four years of training reported an average of 3.9 issues per teacher, teachers with five years of training reported an average of 4.0 issues, and teachers with more than five years of training reported an average of

4.4 issues covered per teacher.

Years of teaching experience seemed to have relatively little influence on the number of controversial issues covered. Teachers with up to five years of experience reported an average of 3.9 issues per teacher, teachers with from six to ten years experience reported an average of 4.3 issues, and teachers with more than ten years of experience reported an average of 4.2 issues covered per teacher.

Years of university training and years of teaching experience seemed to have little influence on the time spent covering controversial issues. Teachers at all levels of training and experience covered the majority of their controversial issues in five periods or less.

Factors Which Hinder or Restrict the Coverage of Controversial Issues

Years of university training. The blocks or obstacles to the teaching of controversial issues as indicated by the teachers (classified according to number of years of university training) are summarized in Table XXXI.

Years of university training seemed to have little relationship with the identification of factors hindering the teaching of controversial issues. Teachers with four years of training identified an average of 2.5 factors per teacher, teachers with five years of training identified an average of 2.1 factors per teacher, and teachers with more than five years of training identified an average of 2.5 factors per teacher. Teachers at all levels of training responded that the coverage of curriculum material was the major obstacle to the teaching of controversial issues.

TABLE XXXI

OPINIONS CONCERNING FACTORS WHICH HINDER THE TEACHING OF CONTROVERSIAL
ISSUES (UNIVERSITY TRAINING GROUPS)^a

Source of Pressure	University training (yrs.)		
	Four	Five	More than five
	Times mentioned		
A. Community or lay groups			
1. Economic	2	0	1
2. Political	1	1	2
3. Religious	5	3	8
4. Patriotic	1	0	3
5. Racial/minority	4	0	1
B. Parents	2	1	5
C. Students	2	2	4
D. School administrators	2	5	7
E. Coverage of prescribed curriculum	10	12	13
F. Other sources	<u>1</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>5</u>
Totals	30	27	49
Average per Teacher	2.5	2.1	2.5

^aAny one teacher could identify more than one block or obstacle.

Years of teaching experience. The blocks or obstacles to the teaching of controversial issues as indicated by the study group (classified according to number of years of teaching experience) are summarized in Table XXXII.

There appeared to be little relationship between years of teaching experience and the identification of factors hindering the teaching of controversial issues.

TABLE XXXII

OPINIONS CONCERNING FACTORS WHICH HINDER THE TEACHING OF CONTROVERSIAL
ISSUES (TEACHING EXPERIENCE GROUPS)^a

Source of Pressure	Teaching experience (yrs.)		
	0-5	6-10	More than ten
	Times mentioned		
A. Community or lay groups			
1. Economic	1	1	1
2. Political	1	3	0
3. Religious	4	7	5
4. Patriotic	0	2	2
5. Racial/minority	2	1	2
B. Parents	0	4	4
C. Students	2	2	4
D. School administrators	4	7	3
E. Coverage of prescribed curriculum	16	9	10
F. Other sources	<u>3</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>3</u>
Totals	33	39	34
Average per Teacher	2.1	2.6	2.4

^aAny one teacher could identify more than one block or obstacle.

All levels of experience identified approximately the same number of obstacles. Teachers at all levels of teaching experience indicated that the coverage of curriculum material was the major obstacle to the teaching of controversial issues.

The Effect of Written Statements of Policy on the Coverage of Controversial Issues.

Years of university training. The responses made by the study group

(classified according to number of years of university training) concerning the existence of a written statement of policy are summarized in Table XXXIII.

TABLE XXXIII
TEACHERS' KNOWLEDGE OF A WRITTEN STATEMENT OF POLICY ON THE TEACHING
OF CONTROVERSIAL ISSUES (UNIVERSITY TRAINING GROUPS)

N=45	Policy exists	Policy does not exist	Uncertain
University training (years)			
Four			
No.	0	3	9
Pct.	0	25	75
Five			
No.	1	5	7
Pct.	8	39	53
More than Five			
No.	0	10	10
Pct.	0	50	50

Years of university training seemed to have some bearing on knowledge of a written statement of policy. While at least half of the teachers at each level of training were uncertain as to the existence of a written school board policy on the teaching of controversial issues, the percentage of teachers who were uncertain decreased with successive years of training.

The responses made by the teachers (classified according to number of years of university training) concerning the influence a written

policy would have on their teaching are summarized in Table XXXIV.

TABLE XXXIV
OPINIONS CONCERNING THE EFFECT A WRITTEN POLICY WOULD HAVE ON THE TEACHING OF CONTROVERSIAL ISSUES (UNIVERSITY TRAINING GROUPS)

N=45	Positive effect	Negative effect	No effect
University training (years)			
Four No. Pct.	4 33	2 17	6 50
Five No. Pct.	5 39	1 8	7 53
More than Five No. Pct.	6 30	3 15	11 55

Years of university training seemed to have little bearing on the effect a written policy would have. At least half of the teachers at each level of university training responded that a written statement of policy would have no effect on their present approach to controversial issues.

Years of teaching experience. The responses made by the teachers (classified according to number of years of teaching experience) concerning the existence of a written statement of policy are summarized in Table XXXV.

TABLE XXXV
TEACHERS' KNOWLEDGE OF A WRITTEN STATEMENT OF POLICY ON THE TEACHING
OF CONTROVERSIAL ISSUES (TEACHING EXPERIENCE GROUPS)

N=45	Policy exists	Policy does not exist	Uncertain
Teaching experience (years)			
0-5			
No.	0	3	13
Pct.	0	19	81
6-10			
No.	0	6	9
Pct.	0	40	60
More than 10			
No.	1	9	4
Pct.	7	64	29

Years of teaching experience seemed to have some bearing on knowledge of a written statement of policy. A majority of teachers with up to ten years of teaching experience were uncertain as to the existence of a written school board policy on the teaching of controversial issues. A majority of teachers with more than ten years of experience responded that no such policy existed. The percentage of teachers uncertain as to the existence of such a policy declined with successive years of teaching experience.

The responses made by the group (classified according to number of years of teaching experience) concerning the influence a written policy would have on their teaching of controversial issues are summar-

ized in Table XXXVI.

TABLE XXXVI
OPINIONS CONCERNING THE EFFECT A WRITTEN POLICY WOULD HAVE ON THE TEACH-
ING OF CONTROVERSIAL ISSUES (TEACHING EXPERIENCE GROUPS)

N=45	Positive effect	Negative effect	No effect
Teaching experience (years)			
0-5			
No.	5	3	8
Pct.	31	19	50
6-10			
No.	5	1	9
Pct.	33	7	60
More than 10			
No.	5	2	7
Pct.	36	14	50

Years of teaching experience seemed to have little bearing on the effect a written statement of policy would have on the teaching of controversial issues. At least half of the teachers at each level of teaching experience responded that a written statement of policy would have no effect on their present approach to controversial issues.

II. SUMMARY

The following points summarize the major findings noted in the analysis made of the responses according to years of university train-

ing and years of teaching experience.

1. The number of years of university training had little bearing on opinions concerning the place of controversial issues in the curriculum. The majority of teachers at all levels of training responded that the school was obligated to provide for the coverage of controversial issues.

2. Years of teaching experience appeared to have some influence on opinions concerning the place of controversial issues in the curriculum. While a majority of teachers at all levels of experience responded that the school was obligated to provide for the coverage of controversial issues, the majority supporting this position declined with successive levels of experience.

3. Years of university training and years of teaching experience appeared to have little bearing on the frequency with which controversial issues are covered. A majority of teachers at all levels of training and experience responded that only controversial issues related to classroom work were covered.

4. Years of university training seemed to have a limited influence on the ability to identify controversial issues which ought to be covered. While a majority of teachers at all levels of training responded that there were many issues which ought to be covered, and a majority of teachers at all levels of training could list specific issues, the majority of teachers listing issues increased with each successive level of university training.

5. Years of teaching experience seemed to have a negative

influence on the ability to identify controversial issues which ought to be covered. While a majority of teachers at each level of experience responded that there were many issues which ought to be covered, the majority decreased with each successive level of teaching experience.

6. Years of university training seemed to have some influence on identifying issues not suitable for coverage in the social studies classroom. Half of the teachers with more than five years of training listed issues which were unsuitable, while a majority of teachers at the other levels responded that there were no issues which should be avoided.

7. Years of teaching experience appeared to have some influence on identifying issues not suitable for coverage in the social studies classroom. A majority of teachers with more than ten years of experience listed issues which ought not to be covered. A majority of teachers at the other levels of experience responded that there were no issues which should be avoided. The percentage of teachers supporting this view decreased with each successive level of teaching experience.

8. Years of university training seemed to have some influence on identifying sources of controversial issues. The number of sources identified increased with successive levels of university training.

9. Years of teaching experience seemed to have little influence on identifying sources of controversial issues. All levels of experience reported approximately the same number of sources.

10. Years of university training seemed to have little or no bearing on the number of controversial issues covered in the school year 1965-1966. The average number of issues reported per teacher was roughly

the same for each level of university training.

11. Years of teaching experience seemed to have little bearing on the number of controversial issues covered in the school year 1965-1966. The average number of issues reported per teacher was roughly the same for each level of teaching experience.

12. Years of university training and teaching experience appeared to have little influence on the time spent covering controversial issues. Teachers at all levels of training and experience covered the majority of their issues in five periods or less.

13. Years of university training appeared to have little influence on identifying factors which hinder the teaching of controversial issues. Teachers at each level of training had roughly the same average of factors identified per teacher.

14. Years of teaching experience seemed to have little bearing on identifying factors hindering the teaching of controversial issues. Teachers at all levels of experience had approximately the same average of factors identified per teacher.

15. Years of university training seemed to influence teacher knowledge of a written statement of policy concerning controversial issues. While at least half of the teachers at each level of training were uncertain as to the existence of such a policy, the percentage of teachers who were uncertain decreased with successive years of training.

16. Years of teaching experience seemed to influence teacher knowledge of a written statement of policy concerning controversial issues. A majority of teachers with more than ten years of experience responded that such a policy did not exist. The percentage of teachers uncertain as to the existence of such a policy declined with successive levels of teaching experience.

17. Neither years of university training nor years of teaching experience seemed to influence the effect a written statement of policy would have on the teaching of controversial issues. At least half of the teachers at each level of training and experience responded that a written policy would have no effect on their approach to controversial issues.

CHAPTER VII

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study was concerned with opinions and practices of Edmonton public high school social studies teachers in relation to the teaching of controversial issues. Interviews were conducted with cooperating teachers to gather information in the following areas:

1. Teachers' opinions on the place of controversial issues in the high school curriculum.
2. The frequency with which controversial issues are covered by high school social studies teachers.
3. Teachers' opinions on those controversial issues they believe should be dealt with and those issues they believe should not be covered in the high school social studies classroom.
4. The sources from which controversial issues are drawn.
5. Those controversial issues which have actually been covered in the school year 1965-1966.
6. Teachers' opinions on the blocks or obstacles which might prevent or restrict the coverage of controversial issues.
7. Teacher knowledge concerning the presence or lack of a written statement of policy from the school board on the teaching of controversial issues.

I. SUMMARY

The following are the major findings of this study of the teach-

ing of controversial issues by Edmonton public high school social studies teachers:

1. A majority of the group studied responded that the school was obligated to provide for the study of controversial issues in the high school. University training seemed to have little bearing on responses made here. The majority of teachers supporting the above position declined with successive levels of teaching experience.

2. A majority of the group cover only those controversial issues which are directly related to material being covered in the classroom. Neither years of university training nor years of teaching experience seemed to influence the frequency with which controversial issues are covered.

3. A majority of the group studied responded that there were many controversial issues within the existing social studies curriculum which ought to be covered. These issues were of a variety of types, with those of a historical/political nature predominating. The majority of teachers listing issues increased with each successive level of university training. The majority of teachers responding that there were many issues which ought to be covered decreased with successive levels of teaching experience.

4. A majority of the group studied responded that there were no controversial issues which should be avoided in the social studies classroom. The majority supporting this position declined with successive levels of university training and teaching experience. The issues that were mentioned as ones to be avoided were primarily in the

areas of religious beliefs and personal social problems.

5. The group studied a variety of sources for the controversial issues taught, with the mass-communication media being the most-mentioned source. Neither years of university training nor years of teaching experience seemed to influence the sources of controversial issues.

6. A majority of the group studied listed controversial issues which they had actually covered in the school year 1965-1966. These issues were of a variety of types and the majority of them were covered in five periods or less. Neither years of university training nor years of teaching experience seemed to influence the number of controversial issues covered.

7. The group studied responded that many pressures act to restrict the coverage of controversial issues in the social studies classroom, with the necessity to cover prescribed curriculum material being the dominating pressure. Neither years of university training nor years of teaching experience seemed to have any influence on the number of pressures reported.

8. A majority of the group studied were uncertain as to the existence of a written statement of policy concerning the teaching of controversial issues. The percentage of teachers who were uncertain declined with successive years of university training and teaching experience. A majority of the group responded that such a written policy would have no effect on the present approach to controversial issues. Neither years of university training nor years of teaching

experience seemed to influence the effect a written statement of policy would have on the teaching of controversial issues.

II. CONCLUSIONS

The following conclusions arise from an examination of the responses made by Edmonton public high school social studies teachers concerning the teaching of controversial issues:

1. There appears to be an agreement of opinion on the place of controversial issues in the social studies between the authorities discussed in Chapter II and the group of Edmonton public high school social studies teachers who were interviewed by the writer. More than three-quarters of the teachers interviewed took a stand which would support the rationale outlined in Chapter II of the study.

2. It is difficult to determine the correlation between opinions and practices of Edmonton public high school social studies teachers concerning the teaching of controversial issues. In assessing the number of controversial issues actually covered in the classroom, such factors as methods used, or types of materials used, were not considered in the analysis. However, in view of the many issues reported as being covered and the time spent on any one issue, the amount of time spent on most of the issues would make it difficult to develop in the student a method of reflective inquiry or to give him an accurate picture of the controversial issue, indicating perhaps that many of the controversial issues may have been covered in a superficial manner.

3. The factors producing the situation described in the above conclusion concerning coverage of controversial issues do not seem to be attributable to years of university training or years of teaching experience, but rather, can be found in the teaching situation itself. Such factors as the coverage of prescribed material for common examinations, supposed or actual pressures from administrators and community groups, and other factors combine to discourage many teachers from spending what they believe to be the time necessary to develop a controversial issue in an effective manner.

4. There appears to be some discrepancy regarding the textbook as a source of controversial issues. While textbooks were rated very low by the sample as a source of controversial issues, many of the issues listed as requiring coverage and many of those listed as actually having been covered must have been dealt with in a textbook. Perhaps the reason for the teachers rejecting the textbook as a source is the manner in which these various issues are covered in the book. The tendency is for many authors to give one interpretation of events or people, thus presenting these matters in a non-controversial manner.

5. The response to the question of controversial issues unsuitable for coverage in the classroom must be regarded with caution. Assuming that the coverage of controversial issues is not a matter of significance for many of the teachers in the sample, the determination of issues not suitable for coverage has probably not been considered to any great extent.

Recommendations for Change

One cannot assume that the findings of this study reflect the opinions and practices of all Edmonton public high school social studies teachers. However, it can be pointed out that the teachers interviewed represented a majority of social studies teachers in the Edmonton Public School System at the time of the study. Thus, it is probable that if the changes advocated in the superintendent's report (see Page 5) are to be realized, then changes will have to be made in the existing situation before a study of human values is possible, as such a study would be very much concerned with the controversial elements of human society. The following ideas are offered for consideration:

1. The fact that a majority of the teachers interviewed were uncertain as to the existence of a written statement of policy on the teaching of controversial issues would seem to suggest that many teachers may be uncertain as to what are the actual limits, if any, on what they can or cannot teach in the classroom. In such circumstances, the teacher's own experiences or the experiences or advice of fellow teachers may serve to set the limits for the individual teacher. Perhaps some sort of official clarification might eliminate the uncertainty or inconsistency which would develop from the above conditions.

2. The responses to Question Seven asking teachers to indicate those factors which hindered the teaching of controversial issues showed that many factors, both within and outside the school situation

were believed to exist which discouraged teachers from studying controversial issues to the extent to which they desired. The dominant factor mentioned was the necessity to cover prescribed curriculum material to prepare for common examinations or provincial examinations. It would appear that if the teachers are to examine controversial issues effectively, it will be necessary to remove some of the pressure associated with covering material for examinations which tend to emphasize objective, factual material.

The pressure identified as coming from religious groups within the community and that coming from school administrators as hindering the coverage of controversial issues would probably be alleviated by the adoption of some official policy as outlined in the first recommendation.

One of the miscellaneous factors singled out as discouraging the teaching of controversial issues was the lack of accurate source materials. In order to remedy this situation, groups of social studies teachers should be given the opportunity to develop and accumulate materials pertaining to various controversial issues.

3. The position of the mass-communication, considered by the teachers interviewed as a leading source of controversial issues, would seem to suggest that curriculum planners considering greater attention to controversial issues in the social studies should study carefully how to utilize the material presented by the mass-communication media in any curriculum revision.

Recommendations for Further Study

The following observations arise from the findings of this study and would seem to be areas which could be examined in further studies.

1. The fact that support for the coverage of controversial issues declined with successive levels of teaching experience could possibly indicate that the longer a person teaches, the more concerned he becomes with covering specific content, a situation which might restrict the examination of controversial issues. Further study might examine the relationship between years of teaching experience and opinion concerning the teaching of controversial issues.

2. The study showed apparently no relationship between either years of university training or years of teaching experience and the frequency with which controversial issues are covered. Further study might examine the relationship between coverage of controversial issues and the teaching situation itself, with reference to those factors outlined in the responses to Question Seven of the interview form.

3. The domination of controversial issues of a historical/political nature in the second part of Question Three could be attributed to the fact that the majority of social studies teachers probably have had a preponderance of history courses during their university training which could make them more aware of issues in this

area. Further study might examine the relationship between university training and perception of controversial issues.

4. The limited number of teachers in Question Four listing specific issues which should not be studied could mean one of at least two things; either the majority of the teachers interviewed actually believe that there are no controversial issues which ought not to be covered, or that the teaching of controversial issues in the social studies curriculum in Edmonton is minor enough so that teachers have rarely had to consider controversial issues which ought not to be studied.

5. The number of times in Question Four that the question of religious faith was mentioned as a taboo subject for the social studies might reflect a tendency in public schools to minimize the time spent studying religion in general or of discussing specific religious faiths. Further study might examine the possible relationship between questions of religious faith as a taboo subject and the reported influence of religious groups in the community in restricting the time spent covering controversial issues as noted in Question Seven.

6. The relatively few times that textbooks were indicated as a source of controversial issues would seem to support the earlier observations of Alexander¹, Krug², and Shaver³.

¹Albert Alexander, op. cit., p. 11.

²Mark Krug, op. cit., p. 464.

³James Shaver, op. cit., p. 233.

Further studies might examine specific textbooks used in Edmonton and other areas to better clarify these observations just referred to.

7. The position of school administrators as a pressure discouraging the examination of controversial issues could be attributed to the fact that school administrators through their offices have considerable contact with the community. This situation makes them susceptible to community pressures and therefore, perhaps anxious to operate the school in a manner so as to produce minimum pressures from the community. Further studies might examine the influence of school administrators' policies and actions on the coverage of controversial issues.

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APPENDIX

APPENDIX

THE INTERVIEW FORM

This study is being undertaken to determine the opinions of social studies teachers in secondary schools in the Edmonton Public School System toward the teaching of controversial issues in the social studies. In addition, a survey will be made concerning what is actually done in relation to the teaching of controversial issues. It is hoped that you will fill this form out in a straightforward manner as all teachers participating in this project will remain anonymous. Your cooperation in this project is very much appreciated.

It is important that you answer as many of the questions as you can. Also, feel free to include comments wherever you believe they are relevant.

For the purposes of this study, the term "controversial issues" refers to those situations or developments in society as conceived by the interviewee where there is a difference of opinion as to what is the proper attitude or course of action.

PERSONAL INFORMATION SHEET

Please place a check mark next to the facts which pertain to you.

Male Female

University Training

Less than 4 years

4 years

5 years

more than 5 years

Total Teaching Experience

0-5 years

6-10 years

11-15 years

more than 15 years

Social Studies Classes Taught (More than one may be checked)

Social Studies 10

Social Studies 20

Social Studies 30

Other social studies courses (Please list them)

I. Which of the following statements most nearly represents your attitude regarding what should be the place of controversial issues in the secondary school social studies curriculum? (check one)

- A. The school has a definite obligation to provide for the discussion of controversial issues in its social studies curriculum.
- B. Although it is desirable for the school to assume responsibility for dealing with controversial issues, it should not be considered obligatory for the school to deal with controversial issues in its social studies curriculum.
- C. Some controversial issues are legitimately a part of the secondary school social studies curriculum but those issues which might meet with local disapproval must be avoided.
- D. There is only a limited place for controversial issues in the secondary school social studies curriculum, for secondary school students cannot be expected to deal with issues about which the adult world still disagrees.
- E. The primary function of a high school education is to teach facts and principles, and there is virtually no place for controversial issues in the secondary school social studies curriculum.

Comments

II. Which of the following conditions most nearly represents the frequency with which you deal with controversial issues in your social studies classes? (check one)

- A. Every significant controversial issue which is of interest to the students and which is within their maturity level is dealt with.
- B. Whenever a controversial issue arises which is related to the material covered in the classroom, and is within the range of the knowledge competence of the students, it is covered.
- C. Controversial issues require too much time, and since there is often no clear-cut answer for most of them, they are rarely considered.
- D. The social studies curriculum (or course of study) makes no provision for dealing with controversial issues, and therefore no time is devoted to them.

Comments

III. Are there, within the usual material, activities, and experience of the social studies classes you most frequently teach, controversial issues you believe ought to be included as a part of the work of your classes? (check one only)

- A. Many
- B. Few
- C. None

Please list those issues you consider most important that would appear within the usual material, activities, and experience in the social studies classes you teach.
(include the course(s) where the issue would most likely appear.)

IV. Are there, within the following broad categories, any controversial issues which ought not to be dealt with in the social studies classroom? If so, please state the issues as clearly as possible under the appropriate heading.

- A. Issues dealing with government and political problems.
- B. Issues dealing with economic problems.
- C. Issues dealing with ethical and moral problems.
- D. Issues dealing with social problems.

E. Issues not covered by these categories.

Comments

V. From which of the following sources are the controversial issues with which you deal most frequently drawn? (more than one source may be checked.)

- A. Text-books regularly assigned to the students.
- B. Outside reading done by the students.
- C. Through classroom discussion in which the class isolates and develops the issue.
- D. Through teacher suggestion and illustration.
- E. Mass-communication media such as radio, television, motion pictures, newspapers, and periodicals.
- F. Other sources not mentioned above. (please list them)

Comments

VI. List those controversial issues with which you have dealt this school year, or are now dealing with in your social studies classes. If possible, indicate the approximate number of periods or class meetings spent by the class studying these issues, and the method used to study the issues. (teacher lecture, debate, student reports through committee work or individual research, etc.)

<u>State of The Issue</u>	<u>Class Involved</u>	<u>Time Devoted to Issue (No. of periods)</u>	<u>Method of Coverage</u>
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VII. Below are listed some of the more common blocks or obstacles to the teaching of controversial issues in the classroom. In your judgment, which of them exerts significant pressure or hinders you from dealing with controversial issues in the social studies classroom to the extent which you would desire? (More than one item may be checked)

A. Community or lay groups whose interest is primarily:

- 1. Economic
- 2. Political

3. Religious
 4. Patriotic
 5. Representatives of racial or minority attitudes.
- B. Parents
C. Students
D. School administrators
E. Coverage of prescribed curriculum material
F. Other sources not mentioned above (please list them)

Comments

VIIIA. Has your local board of education adopted a written statement of policy concerning the teaching of controversial issues?

 Yes

 No

 Uncertain

If you answered "yes" to the above question, then answer the following question by encircling the appropriate answer.

Does the statement of policy permit an examination and discussion of all controversial issues?

Yes

No

VIIIB. What effect would or does a written statement of policy concerning the teaching of controversial issues have on your own teaching of controversial issues?

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